

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Another view of Evan
Runner..... p. 12

Kuyper on the meaning of
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57th year of publication

Christian Heritage Party works at becoming best alternative

Alan Doerksen

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — The Christian Heritage Party (CHP) sees itself as a credible alternative to the Canadian Alliance (CA) and other parties, and is working to overcome its main weakness, which is that few Canadians know the party exists, and many of those who do don't understand what it's about. Ron Gray, CHP's national leader, spoke on this and other key issues in an exclusive interview with *Christian Courier* at the party's national convention in Niagara Falls, in late March.

Asked what makes his party a better alternative than others, Gray asserted, "Our commitment to the supremacy of God and the authority of his word. Those are the core principles from which everything else flows. At their founding convention in Ottawa in February, 1999 the Canadian Alliance overwhelmingly rejected the supremacy of God — actually voted against something that is in the Canadian Constitution! The other parties are not so outspoken about it, but they reject God's supremacy by neglect."

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ALAN DOERKSEN

Ron Gray, national leader of the Christian Heritage Party.

Only pro-life party

"The CHP is the only openly pro-life, pro-family federal party. The other parties — especially the Alliance — have even begun to come unglued because of internal conflicts over the right of Christians to have a role in

making policy."

But Gray admits his party has weaknesses. "Our main weaknesses are two: according to one survey we did, 76 per cent of Canadians have never even heard of us; they don't know we exist. And of those who do know, many have a

mistaken idea of what we're about: they think that we plan to use the coercive powers of government to force an unwilling nation to become Christian. But that's not our plan at all; rather, we seek to place ourselves, as politicians, under the authority and discipline of the Gospel, because that's the only way we can have access to 'the wisdom that is from above,' which we would need to govern this great people.

"The fact that three-quarters of Canadians do not know we exist is an indictment of my old profession, journalism. A democracy must have an informed electorate, able to make intelligent choices among the options available to them. That's why we defend a free press: so that the information will be available. If the news media fail to make the information available, they are in effect censoring the electorate's range of choices.

"Let me give you an example: in 1996 there was a by-election in Etobicoke North; I ran for the CHP. There was only one evening all-candidates' meeting, held in a local high school auditorium. About 250 people attended. I'm

sure the majority of those present would tell you that the CHP dominated the evening: more questions, more applause than any of the other candidates. But that night, when the other 11,750 voters turned on the TV news, we didn't exist. Why? Because when I was speaking, the TV cameras were not only turned off, they were pointed at the floor! That's censorship."

Loyal membership

Gray also acknowledges that in the 2000 election, his party was not able to field enough candidates to keep its official party status. Because of that, the party is currently not able to issue tax receipts for donations. Despite that setback, donations to the party have stayed at a good level, he reports. But Gray hopes CHP will regain its official status again soon. CHP's key strengths are: "Above all, the authority of God's word. I don't have to wait for the polls to be published each week to know what I think! Secondly, a very, very loyal membership.

"Another strength is the fact that although the major
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Marshall report warns against 'Talibanization' of Nigeria

Harry der Nederlanden [with news release from Freedom House]

As Islamic extremism threatens the freedom and lives of Christians in an increasing number of countries, Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom released a major report detailing the effects of Islamic imposition of sharia in Nigeria.

The 101-page report entitled *The Talibanization of Nigeria: Sharia Law and Religious Freedom*, authored by Dr. Paul Marshall, Senior Fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, was released at the end of

March and describes how sharia threatens not just democratic freedoms in Nigeria but the very stability of the country.

A case involving sharia recently made headlines around the world when the court decided against stoning a woman for adultery. However, officials for the Center say the decision was an unusual exception to sharia.

Nothing to reverse sharia

"The March 25 decision not to stone a woman to death for adultery was based only on a technicality and does nothing to reverse or moderate sharia," stated Marshall.

The Talibanization of Nigeria is based on research in several countries and a fact-finding mission to Nigeria led by Marshall in May of last year. The mission interviewed religious leaders, government officials, human rights activists, and victims of religious discrimination throughout Nigeria.

As reported in the last issue of CC, the Nigerian government has recently ruled that the implementation of sharia is unconstitutional; however, it has already been adopted by 12 northern states and reversing it will undoubtedly precipitate even more violence than

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BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO BY BOB SIDORINS

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a Baptist. The Nigerian government has recently ruled that the implementation of sharia is unconstitutional; however, sharia has already been adopted by 12 northern states.

News

Reformed Christians are core of CHP, says Gray

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metropolitan and national media still refuse to tell the Canadian electorate about the CHP, we have two strategies for overcoming this blackout: First, as we grow larger, they will eventually have to acknowledge our existence — even if they heap scorn upon us.

"Second, we do get an open reception among Canada's community media. Those media are smaller, individually — but their combined audience is actually greater than the combined audience of all the big metropolitan dailies. So although it's more labor-intensive and expensive to spend our time working with the community media, we will eventually get the word out this way."

Defending truth in public square

"I believe that God is looking for people who will stand up to defend his truth in the public square. If we don't do it, he'll find someone else who will. I don't know whether we'll attain 'success' in

the world's eyes. But for a Christian, obedience is already success."

Gray asserts that his party's game plan for the future is "to grow. We've more than doubled the CHP's membership in the past two years, but we're still only about 60 per cent the size of the Tories, and 'way smaller than the Liberals and the Alliance.

"Our goal is to be able to present 308 candidates, so that no Canadian will ever be denied the opportunity of voting for a party that endorses the supremacy of God as a guiding principle for public policy."

40 per cent of membership is Reformed

Reformed Christians are the core of CHP's support, says Gray. "About 40 per cent of our membership still comes from the Reformed Churches, and from people of Dutch ancestry. I think that's because the Calvinist tradition of bringing our faith into the public square was strongest, in the early

20th century," in the Netherlands.

"But we need to remember that [Abraham] Kuyper needed the support of the Dutch Catholics to achieve his goals; and no party has ever formed a government in Canada without the support of the 50 per cent of the population who identify themselves as Catholics. And we should not forget that Catholics were deeply involved in launching this party — but they knew they'd need the support of the Dutch Calvinists to make it work.

"We also need to be able to reach out in a principled way to Anglicans, Baptists, Lutherans, Pentecostals — the whole Christian spectrum. We found a way to do that in the March for Jesus movement: they simply said, 'Focus on Jesus, not on the peripheral things.' We need to do that, too. This is about bringing Jesus to the centre of Canadian public life."

Looking at the current Canadian government's attitude toward Christianity, Gray says, "We have gone far beyond neutrality, beyond

militant secularism into anti-Christian bias at the level of government."

Renewed leadership

At the conference, CHP gave Gray a complete 100 per cent endorsement and renewed mandate as national leader. The party is now gearing up for several byelections, which Gray expects the Prime Minister to call soon. CHP will be running candidates in three of the ridings: Windsor West, St. Boniface (in Winnipeg), and Calgary Southwest. Gray himself will run in the Calgary riding, against newly-elected CA leader Stephen Harper.

Harper was elected CA leader at the same time the CHP conference was going on. That election became a big topic for discussion at the CHP conference. "The decision there has made a dramatic shift in Canadian politics," acknowledged Gray. He expects CA to move away from its Christian roots because of Harper's election. "Harper has said he doesn't want

any of the moral issues on the table at all. I think there will be some kind of an exodus of Christians from the CA. There are some who will stay, in hopes they can change the nature of the party. They can't, because it's in their constitution they don't deal with these issues.... I anticipate there are some who will leave and come to us. We will certainly welcome them."

CHP also dealt with issues such as defence at the convention. "We have been renewing our military policy," explains Gray. "We feel it's very important to update it now, because Canada's military is currently underfunded, understaffed, overextended — and its role is being changed without ever having been debated in Parliament. Since Lester Pearson's days, we have been peacekeepers. In [Operation] Anaconda, we became peacemakers, and went into active hostile combat for the first time in 50 years."

More than 100 delegates attended the Niagara Falls conference.

Christians should be 'co-belligerents' with other believers

Alan Doerksen

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. — Pluralism is an important concept for Christians to grasp, so that they can co-operate with members of other religions on issues of mutual concern, asserts Hermina Dykxhoorn, president of the Alberta Federation of Women United for Families.

Dykxhoorn spoke about pluralism at a workshop at the Christian Heritage Party's national convention in Niagara Falls, held in late March. Although not a member of the Christian Heritage Party (CHP), she urged party members to become "co-belligerents in a cause" with members of other religions. "That's a model CHP could use."

Co-operating without compromising

Dykxhoorn has often taken part in United Nations conferences in various countries, and says she encourages the pluralist idea a lot in her work. "At the UN, we're working all the time with Muslims. Besides the Vatican, [Christians] have no states." Christians and Muslims can work together at that level to combat "the kind of fluid ethics they [the UN] promote," asserts Dykxhoorn. "It's a limited co-operation."

In the Alberta Federation, notes Dykxhoorn, "there are quite a few Mormon people.... We work with



Hermina Dykxhoorn speaks with a delegate at the recent CHP conference in Niagara Falls.

the world, and we are going to have a cross on the dais," she told them.

Looking at the background of religious pluralism in Canada, Dykxhoorn observed that until the mid-20th century, most immigrants to Canada were from a Christian background, and from Europe. But since the

1970s, Canada has had a great influx of immigrants from "non-Christian countries," and we "no longer have that monoculture that we once had," she said. "How do we deal with that?"

Some pluralists think "all religions are true," said Dykxhoorn. "That's probably the viewpoint of the elites in our country" — such as political leaders. "Democracy has been applied to ultimate truth. This reflects non-thinking. Social pluralism does not relate to metaphysical pluralism." Such thinking ignores the great differences between religions, and abandons the laws of logic. To follow that doctrine, "Christianity would have to

shed virtually all of its doctrines," says Dykxhoorn.

Unique Christian claims

Although people who follow other religions do some good things because of "general revelation," Christianity has unique claims to truth. One is that "God has personally entered time and space in the person of Jesus," explains Dykxhoorn.

One challenge Christians face is: "How can we graciously respond to those offended by the unique claims of Christianity?" Dykxhoorn asked the workshop participants. She offered several suggestions. One is that "Christianity's exclusivism derives from the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ, from those who were eye-witnesses to his resurrection."

Christians can also emphasize that God invites all people to accept him.

"You can have a pluralist viewpoint, but you can also promote the exclusive claims of Christianity," argued Dykxhoorn.

Leaving the ivory tower

Some CHP members at the workshop expressed their views about religious pluralism. Jacob Redekopp, who immigrated to Canada from Russia around the time of Stalin, said that, in Russia, "we were taught religion is the opiate of the people." Now, in Can-

ada, "While we sit here secure, our dear brothers and sisters are being persecuted by other religions," in other countries. "Those people who persecute and kill our brothers and sisters are given freedom here. Why? What can we do?"

Dykxhoorn responded, "We cannot live in an ivory tower past" — when Christians formed the majority in Canada. Now, "300,000 people of different religions are coming into Canada each year.... We are going to have immigration because we are not having children." Christians should see our immigration situation as "an opportunity for evangelism."

One female participant asserted that "if [Canadians] got our Christian perspective back, we would encourage our people again to be having children and stopping abortion."

Sya Strydhorst stated that secular humanists pose a problem for Christians because "they want to eradicate all monotheistic religions." Any "accountability to an ultimate authority" conflicts with humanists' agenda, she asserted.

Dykxhoorn noted that she heard one speaker at a UN conference say, "The three great monotheistic world religions will not be compatible with the New World Order." That is because those religions, including Christianity, have "black and white ethics" — unlike the "fluid ethics" the UN promotes.

News/Politics

Nigerian sharia 'alarmingly similar' to Taliban's form of Islam

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when sharia was first made law. "Though some form of sharia has long been part of Nigeria's civil law," the report points out, many northern Nigerian states "are expanding sharia jurisdiction to criminal law matters in ways that violate Nigeria's constitution and international human rights standards."

The report points out: "The type of Islam being propagated is alarmingly similar to that imposed by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Women are being forced to cover their heads and be veiled, while public transportation and education are being sexually segregated. As the Taliban destroyed Buddhist statues, so extremist Muslims in Nigeria are destroying churches. In both places, people who change their religion, or are suspected of doing so, face death. Accused thieves have had their hands amputated, and women accused of adultery have been sentenced to be stoned to death."

Government-approved vigilantes

"In both places, the law has been enforced not only by police but by government-approved vigilante groups. While we are not aware of evidence that terrorist groups allied with Al-Qaeda are operating in Nigeria, the country is experiencing the rapid growth of the type of Islamic extremism from which Bin Laden has drawn support, there are indications that this growth is being supported by foreign radical Islamic regimes and organizations, and some foreign radicals have been involved in the violence."

Many of Nigeria's Muslim and non-Muslim citizens face barbaric treatment from Hizbah (religious enforcers). Hizbah vigilantes mete out harsh, on-the-spot, extra-legal punishments for such "un-Islamic" activities as violating dress codes and questioning Islamic teachings. Women caught riding alone in taxis are subject to physical abuse by the Hizbah.

An eye for an eye

In May 2001, an Islamic court in Katsina State ordered the removal of the left eye of Ahmed Tijjani, who was found guilty of partially blinding a friend during an argument. Two months later in Birnin-Kebbi, a sharia court ordered 15-year-old Abubakar Aliyu's hand amputated for stealing the equivalent of \$300. But Dr. Marshall emphasizes that the effect on human rights is far more profound and far wider than the matter of inhuman treatment.

The report cites the deaths of as many as 6,000 Christians, Muslims and others, many hacked to death with knives and swords, in conflicts precipitated by the new laws. Restrictions on the construction of churches have increased and dozens of churches in the northern sharia states have been destroyed. Dr. Marshall said "The West should be aware that extreme sharia in Nigeria creates widespread persecution of the churches and violently polarizes the Christian and Muslim communities."

Sharia could lead to civil war

The report concludes that if left unchecked, the rapid spread of extreme sharia law could push Nigeria into civil war. Speaking of the religious strife over sharia, Nigerian Nobel Prize winner in literature, Wole Soyinka, lamented, "The roof is already burning over our head... the prelude to war, civil war." Already torn by ethnic and religious conflict, and with a history of military dictatorship, Nigeria has only recently embarked on a democratic path, albeit tentatively.

There are indications that this growth is being supported by foreign radical Islamic regimes and organizations, such as Sudan and Saudi Arabia, and some foreign radicals have been involved in the violence. Since September 11, demonstrations in support of Osama Bin Laden have taken place in Nigeria, and hundreds of civilians have been killed in rioting between Bin Laden supporters and Christians.

The report lists numerous problems created by the new sharia, including these:

- Despite official denials, non-Muslims are in some jurisdictions required to be judged by sharia courts, as, for example, in matters of marriage to, or in disputes with Muslims.

- Sharia is imposed on all Muslims regardless of an individual's desire to be tried in a constitutionally-constituted court. In some instances sharia is interpreted to override the constitution, thus working to subvert Nigeria's democratic order.

- Legal due process is violated by the establishment of vigilante systems, separate from the police, to monitor compliance with the law and "arrest" alleged violators. Without any court hearing or trial, such vigilantes have attacked and beaten those who they claim violate sharia.

- In at least one case, due process was violated by sharia authorities carrying out a corporal

sentence even though an appeal was under way.

- Sharia legitimizes the killing of those who have exercised their right to freedom to change their religion.

- Women's equality before the law is violated since, in at least some of the sharia courts, the testimony of a woman is given only half the weight of a man's. Men are usually not punished for alleged sexual crimes, whereas women have suffered corporal punishment and death sentences.

- Non-Muslims are barred from being judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in the sharia courts to

which they can be subject, thus making them second-class citizens.

- Sharia increases restrictions on the construction of churches and encourages the destruction of churches that have already been built. Similar restrictions have not been put on mosques.

Concrete recommendations

The report ends with lists of concrete recommendations to the governments of both the U.S. and Nigeria.

Dr. Paul Marshall is the author of many books including the

best-selling, award-winning book *Their Blood Cries Out*, a detailed study of persecuted Christians worldwide. He is the editor of *Religious Freedom in the World: A Global Survey of Freedom and Persecution*. Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom works to stop religious repression by documenting and publicizing restrictions on religious and other human rights, and by mobilizing public support in defense of those who are imprisoned, tortured, exiled, or otherwise persecuted for religious reasons.

Coolidge left lasting legacy



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Last month the Christian community in North America lost, not only Prof. Evan Runner, but David Coolidge, whose early death left behind a widow and three young children. David established the Marriage Law Project at the Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America and at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, both in Washington, D.C. He wrote extensively and persuasively in defence of a normative understanding of marriage as a distinct community in God's world.

Having grown up in Detroit, David went on to study the history of ideas at Williams College, where he earned a bachelor's degree with honors in 1978. In 1986 he received a master of arts in religious studies at the Howard University Divinity School. Finally in 1994 he received a JD at the Georgetown University Law Center, where he was selected to be Public Interest Law Scholar.

Coolidge was on staff from 1983 to 1991 at the Justice Center in Washington, D.C., where he worked for reforms to the criminal justice system, aimed in particular at finding alternatives to imprisonment and facilitating restitution for victims of crimes. He was licensed to practise law in the state of Virginia.

In 1993 David married Joan Orgon, whom he had met through the work of the Center for Public Justice, where she worked under executive director James Skillen. Together they had three children, Daniel, Samuel and Rose. Tragically, in the summer of 2001 David began experiencing the symptoms that would eventually be diagnosed as an inoperable malignant brain tumor. He died on March 10 at the young age of 45, with his family at his side.

Defending institution of marriage

David's lasting legacy will undoubtedly be seen as his ongoing efforts to defend legally the institution of marriage in opposition to recent attempts at redefining its character to fit a predominant liberal mindset. Liberalism, with its individualistic understanding of society, has sought to recast all communities indiscriminately as voluntary associations. Accordingly marriage is

seen as little more than a mutual contract between consenting partners, to be revised at will according to their shifting whims and predilections. Thus if two men or two women wish to marry each other, then there should be nothing standing in their way.

Engendering controversy

Not surprisingly, such efforts have engendered controversy, primarily because, despite its variable cultural forms, marriage is an institution grounded in near universal human experience. On a pre-theoretical, experiential level, few have any difficulty distinguishing a family from a labor union, a church from a state, or a marriage from a limited liability business partnership. By attempting to conceive all these as mere voluntary associations, liberals effectively demand that we suppress our own experience of the diversity intrinsic to God's creation.

It is to David's credit that he sought to vindicate the uniqueness of marriage. As he himself put it, "Marriage, like the sky, cannot be redefined by any statute."

It is a tragic irony that David and Joan themselves enjoyed a marriage lasting not quite 10 years. During this time, they lost three children to miscarriage or stillbirth, the most recent of which was only last autumn. Yet three more children survive. Their marriage proved fruitful in other ways as well, as is evident in David's scholarly work. It is not unreasonable to suppose that David's fervor for marriage as an institution grew out of the deep love he had for his own wife, second only to his love for the One who brought them together for so brief a time. We shall miss him.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. He knew David Coolidge primarily through occasional e-mail correspondence on issues of mutual interest.

Editorial

A painted house

Harry der Nederlanden

A novel I recently picked up to read for diversion made me reflect on our own relationship to the not-so-distant past.

The Painted House by John Grisham is quite a departure from his best-selling courtroom dramas. He draws on his Mississippi childhood to give us a deeply moving portrait of a young boy growing up on a cotton farm. His parents and grandparents share the same modest farmhouse as they struggle year after year to earn enough to live and to pay off the costs of planting.

The picture he paints of life on the cotton farm will be familiar to many immigrants, even though they've never been in the south. It is a life of constant hard work set against a background of anxiety about crop failures that will render them unable to pay their bills. From year to year, it is a struggle to come up with enough money to plant next year's crop and to have enough money to buy food and clothes.

Dreaming of a better life

The story unfolds from the perspective of seven-year-old Luke. The farm is all he knows, as his family seldom goes farther afield than to the nearby town — on Saturday afternoons when there is no pressing work — and to the Baptist church on Sunday. The house of the title, like all those of the modest cotton farmers, is unpainted, but it is Luke's home, where he is surrounded by a loving family. His father and grandfather are stern men

and expect young Luke to do his share of the work, which is to pick cotton from sunup till supper during picking season.

They are long, boring days for a seven-year-old boy, but he dreams of buying a bright red Cardinals jacket with his earnings and of one day becoming a professional baseball player and playing for the Cardinals. His father, too, had long ago had such a dream, but is now bound to the hard routines of farming. His mother dreams of one day living in a painted house somewhere where life isn't hand-to-mouth.

Once a year at harvest time, life on the farm takes on a new excitement for Luke. A family of hill people from the Ozarks erect a tent in the front yard and serve as hired hands for a few months to pick cotton. At the same time, his grandfather also hires as many Mexicans — “wetbacks” — as possible in a race against the weather to get in the crop on time. The group of Mexican men arrive hungry and thirsty from Texas, riding in the back of an open truck. Also part of the cast is a family of sharecroppers that lives nearby. They don't own the land they farm and are therefore a rung lower on the social scale than Luke's family; the kids are barefoot and filthy and Luke's parents don't want him to associate with them. Although Luke's folks are only a step away from the same grinding poverty, they look down on the sharecroppers.

These three groups become part of the life of Luke and his family as they work together to bring in the cotton crop and struggle to earn enough to live another year. As Luke works alongside all these very different people, he becomes aware that they consider him privileged and that, although they badly need the work, they deeply resent having to slave for someone else. Among the Mexicans there is a hard-eyed, knife-toting fellow called Cowboy. He is clearly filled with resentment and even contempt for his “masters.” The son of the hill family, Hank, is boiling with barely suppressed resentment and rage; he torments Luke because he feels that Luke's family looks down on them as hillbillies “who marry their sisters.” He asks sneeringly, “Why don't you sodbusters paint your houses?” Luke gets beaten up by the sharecropper kids, partly because they hate being objects of his mother's nosey charity and partly because they believe his older brother, now fighting in Korea, has made their sister pregnant.

There's a lot more to be said about the book, but I'm not writing a review. As the story unfolds, the farm, which at first seems a picture of a simple, honest and relatively innocent way of life, gradually becomes a complex mirror of a larger society. All these people come together at the cotton harvest in pursuit of their own dreams and desires. They don't always harmonize. In the book, they form a potent mix of passions and resentments that is constantly in danger of flaring up into conflict and violence.

Departure from a Reformed past

We tend to romanticize the family farm and, indeed, family life as it used to be — a close-knit unit with a certain self-discipline and a secure space where clear, honest values are shared by everyone. Recently, a group of us were invited by Harry Antonides to come together to discuss a Dutch book written by Geert Mak, the son of a Reformed “dominee” (minister) in the Netherlands which describes his own disillusion with and departure from his Reformed Kuyperian past. His abandonment of the faith is typical of many and sheds some light on this mass

exodus from a way of life which many of us still hold dear. It had the seeming solidity and security of the family farm. It was a way of life that had been carefully cultivated and constructed according to biblical norms. Why this sudden disillusionment by the post-war generation? During the discussion, a distinction was made between inner and outer factors. It's a useful distinction, but usually outer factors quickly become internalized.

In one of George Steiner's early books, *In Bluebeard's Castle*, written over 30 years ago, he writes about the mood among the youth of post-war Europe, describing the war damage as “the destruction of inner forms.” For generations, kids schooled in the West had been taught the Judeo-Christian heritage as both preeminent and as the future of humanity. They were taught to look down on all other cultures as inferior, as stages on the way to Western enlightenment. A painted house.

The opposite is true now (the 70s), he observes: “Slogan-mongers and pseudo-philosophers have familiarized the West with the notion that the white man has been a leprosy on the skin of the earth, that his civilization is a monstrous imposture or, at best, a cruel, cunning disguise for economic, military exploitation.” For the young, he says, “the image of Western culture as self-evidently superior, as embodying within itself almost the sum total of intellectual and moral power, is either a racially tinged absurdity or a museum piece.”

This mood of self-criticism and self-repugnance has only been broadened and deepened over the last 30 years. It is endemic. All our traditions and institutions have been weakened by the loss of confidence this has generated. Including the church, its traditions and certitudes. In fact, it seems as if the more staunchly a church clings to those certitudes, the more likely its youth are to develop an adverse reaction. Their eyes have been opened by the apostles of suspicion. Since these critics of Western culture (and religion) have exposed much that is true, we won't win our youth back by proclaiming more loudly than before the virtues of the past.

We need repentance and conversion

We can maintain a healthy contact with our collective past in the same way we do with our personal past: by repentance and conversion. On an institutional and intellectual level this is not an easy process. When Steiner wrote, he saw youth, especially the artistic, turning to “third-world” cultures for “a violent transfusion of those energies, those styles of feeling.” Our youth are frequently turning from “high” cultural forms of worship that involve self-discipline, stateliness, intellectuality, to those more open to feeling and non-verbal communion. At a time when understanding is more important than ever, they tend to deprecate or ignore theology, probably because it often does not address the questions they're asking in their language.

The church is tempted nowadays to cater to the latest sensibility or “needs.” By doing so, however, it is in danger of turning religion and worship into just another consumer item that is marketed by satisfying consumer demand. Too much of contemporary charismatic and evangelical worship seems contemptuous of the past and is wholly oriented to the contemporary. This strikes me as a form of escapism. It will not equip us to participate as intellectually responsible Christians in reconstructing our culture and our institutions and the attitude of our fellows toward the Christian faith. Our house needs more than a paint job; it needs renovation, but renovation according to an ancient blueprint.

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Letters

Re-interpreting Job

Re *Interpreting Job*, Bert Hielema (March 25, 2002), I would like to suggest that the book of Job serves to remind us that God reigns supreme, that He created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, that it's okay to ask God why, and that we should be careful about what we say, since God's ways are so much higher than ours.

Job is a blameless, upright man who fears God and shuns evil. Apparently, there is no one on earth like him. In spite of these exemplary qualities, God gives Satan permission to antagonize Job.

God sets the boundaries

God sets the boundaries, and Satan goes to work, only to discover that Job, in spite of being stripped of his wealth, family and health, still loves God.

Job's faith is strong, and he tells his unhelpful wife, "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

As Job's health deteriorates he asks God why he's become a target. He wants to know what he's done wrong, and finally, in absolute despair, he asks to be put out of his misery. We all, at some time or another, have asked God why. Our health, jobs, marriages, or families are on the rocks, and in agony and frustration we cry out "Why?"

Why didn't I get the job or promotion. Why is my marriage falling apart? Why do I have cancer? Why are my children so difficult? Why is life so hard? Why...?

The apostle Paul pleaded with God to remove the thorn in his flesh. "Will you take it away God?" God says, "No. My grace is sufficient for you."

CCEF Canadian, letter misleading

Jack Zondag's letter in the March 11, 2002 issue of the Christian Courier about the Canadian Christian Education Foundation (CCEF) is very misleading. He claims the CCEF does not support curriculum designed for Canadian Christian schools. He is very wrong! He's also wrong about Christian Schools International (CSI). Zondag claims CSI develops "curriculum in the U.S., not Canadian curriculum." That definitely is not true!

Opposite is true

As a matter of fact, the opposite is true. Since 25 per cent of the CSI member schools are based in Canada, CCEF has raised 25 per cent of the necessary funds to develop Christian textbooks to serve as many of God's children as possible, regardless on what side of the border they live on. CCEF's partner foundation in the U.S. raises the remaining 75 per cent. In the past 26 years CCEF has contributed over \$2 million for this.

A recently conducted study by CCEF has again indicated that in excess of 25 per cent of CSI-produced teaching materials are used on the Canadian side of the border. This should be the indication that these teaching materials are still very much appreciated in Canada and justifying CCEF's involvement in helping to develop these textbooks and

other teaching materials.

Certainly CCEF recognizes that each province has particular curriculum requirements that organizations such as the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) needs to satisfy. CCEF has also contributed nearly \$500,000 towards that over several years.

CCEF was established several years ago to help CSI develop materials that help God's children around the world, including Canadian children, to see life through godly glasses (all those aspects of culture, including God's Word, that we all share, no matter which is our country).

In Zondag's letter he states that OACS has big plans. Big plans usually have a big price tag. CCEF is committed to fostering a spirit of co-operation between all school districts and CSI. CCEF believes it is much more cost effective to work together in the continuous development of Christian education materials than for each district to do its own thing.

CCEF's volunteer board is convinced that its donors get the most value for their donations by staying the course with CCEF and CSI in a spirit of co-operation with all districts.

Menno Eelkema, President, Canadian Christian Education Foundation Inc., Burlington, Ont.

Article about Olympics appreciated

When boys and girls are about to be adults they then have to decide whether to spend time doing the same — sports and music stuff which then takes the time they have. Most of us decide to do something which may help people directly or use our talents better. Just because someone takes time to do sports does not mean they will be as successful as professional players — this only has space for a few.

It was mentioned that there are no CRC folk in the NHL. Well, there are a number of Dutch names....

Peter Valk now plays for Toronto. He is a CRC member (Trinity CRC Edmonton) His father is an auto mechanic and has his busi-

ness at Fort Road close to the LRT [rapid transit] station. He was at the Christian school and likely high school as well and his family are active CRC members.

Adult Hockey Leagues are in Ontario and in Edmonton. Before ice time became too expensive and youth went to basketball, churches played against each other regularly. College players love playing sports. This includes Calvin College and Dordt having hockey teams.

Those that play regularly like to see professional players, since they play faster, quicker and have more tricks up their sleeves.

August Guillaume

Jesus, before his death, asked God, "Is there any other way? Take this cup from me." The answer again is "No." And Jesus cries out, "My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me?"

David, in Psalm 22, also asks God, "Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?"

From a human perspective we might be inclined to say, "It's not fair. How could a God of love allow such suffering?" Many reject God for this very reason.

Be still and know that he is God

In our asking, we may discover that God is telling us to be still and know that he is God, that his grace is sufficient. Asking out of a humble and repentant, rather than a judgmental spirit, is what God — the potter — desires.

We also know that he can do far more than we could think or imagine. His ways are so much higher than ours. We can take comfort in the knowledge that he will not give us anything more than that which we are able to handle, and most importantly, he will be with us wherever we go. I have personally experienced it.

When God finally speaks to Job, he says, "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me" (Job 40:7). It is time for God to ask the questions: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? ... Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?... Do you send the lightning bolts on their way?... God is relentless in his questions, and if there was any doubt about his sovereignty, it now becomes abundantly clear: he is the potter, we are the clay,

Job humbly responds, "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.... Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know."

Job's friends, in their human wisdom, thought they could help Job. You have done something wrong. Repent. Who are you to

ask God why! But God tells them to ask Job to pray for them so that he won't deal with them according to their folly.

Be careful what you say.

God has given us dominion over creation, and Mr. Hielema repeatedly and accurately points out in his columns that environmental health is daily being sacrificed for selfish gain. However, I surrender to the God of creation rather than that which was created. For it is God who reigns supreme, not the creation.

It can be agonizingly difficult to glorify God in the middle of pain, and it is my prayer that when confronted with trials and tribulations Jesus will plead for me. For, as the hymn continues: lest by base denial, I depart from thee.

**Irene Vander Spruit
Stirling, Ont.**

Tax credit is refundable, says OACS

A small, but important correction is required to your story on the Equity in Education Tax Credit (March 25, 2002 CC).

It was a refundable tax credit that was proposed to the government, and it is a refundable tax credit that is now being implemented. Lower income, multi-child families will benefit most from this tax credit precisely because it has nothing to do with tax paid or owing.

Those who need it most who will be hurt most by Dalton McGuinty's promise to repeal the tax credit.

**John Vanasselt
Director of Communications
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools**

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News/Education

John Polkinghorne wins 2002 Templeton Prize

NEW YORK (EP) — John C. Polkinghorne, a mathematical physicist and Anglican priest whose treatment of theology as a natural science has invigorated the search for interface between science and religion and made him a leading figure in this emerging field, is the winner of the 2002 Templeton Prize.

Polkinghorne, 71, resigned a prestigious position as Professor of Mathematical Physics at the University of Cambridge in 1979 to pursue theological studies, becoming a priest in 1982. Since then, his extensive writings and lectures have consistently applied scientific habits to Christianity, resulting in a modern and compelling exploration of the faith. His approach to the fundamentals of Christian orthodoxy — including the Trinity, Christ's resurrection after death, and God's creation of the universe — use the habits of a rigorous scientific mind, and have brought him international recognition as a unique voice for understanding the Bible as well as evolving doctrine.

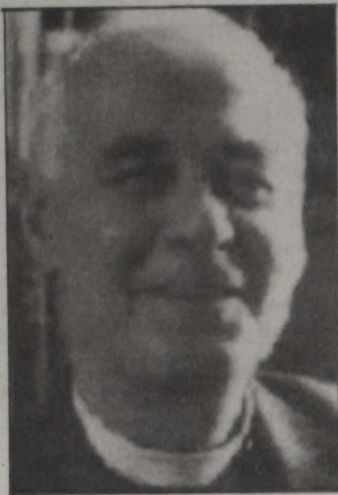
The Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities, founded by Sir John Templeton in 1972 as the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, is the world's largest annual monetary prize given to an individual, currently worth 700,000 pounds sterling (about \$1 million U.S.). It is the world's best-known religion prize, awarded each year to a living person to encourage and honor those who advance spiritual matters.

Mother Teresa won first Templeton Prize

The monetary value of the Templeton Prize always exceeds the Nobel as a way to underscore Templeton's belief that benefits from advances in spiritual discoveries can be quantifiably more vast than those from other worthy human endeavors. Mother Teresa won the first Templeton Prize in 1973, six years before she received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Duke of Edinburgh will award the prize to Polkinghorne in a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on Monday, April 29.

Polkinghorne joins a number of other physicists who are Templeton Prize laureates, including Freeman Dyson, who has sought to reconcile issues of technology and social justice; Ian Barbour, a pioneer in the integration of science and religion; and Paul Davies, a mathematical physicist working at the forefront of quantum physics



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

John C. Polkinghorne

and cosmology, who has gone on to examine their philosophical and theological implications.

A scientist-theologian

In contrast to those Templeton Prize recipients, however, Polkinghorne established himself as a scientist-theologian who is much more comfortable with traditional interpretations of Christian Scripture and dogma. Still, he steadfastly defends the role of science in advancing understanding of the workings of the universe. He has written, for example, that belief in the Big Bang is compatible with belief in God as the Creator and that evolution is a perfect fit with the concept of a God-given gift of creation that continues to be and to make itself.

Polkinghorne established himself as an important figure in the world of mathematical physics at a time when the science was being revolutionized with startling discoveries about sub-atomic particles. One of his most important contributions was his creation of mathematical models that calculate the trajectory of fast-moving elementary particles, helping to reveal the structure of matter.

Surprise decision

By 1979, however, Polkinghorne began to question the likelihood that he could continue to bring advancements to theoretical physics, recognizing that the majority of those in math-based subjects make their most useful contributions in the first half of their working lives. With his children nearing adulthood and after attending biweekly Bible and theology study meetings for several years under the guidance of an Anglican priest, Polkinghorne began considering how he would spend the rest of his life.

Planting a literal tulip

As the tulips begin to bloom this spring I think of two things: God's good creation and our Reformed heritage. How friendly are they?

On one hand, a vibrant creation theology is the foundation of campus ministry, not to mention the whole Christian school movement. We believe that God lovingly rules over all of life, and thus it is the Christian's delight to explore every hidden part of it as an act of worship. All things. As the new Calvin College ad campaign says (hinting to Col. 1):

God created *all things* and they were good.

All things have fallen from their original goodness.

Christ, who redeemed *all things*, eventually will restore them.

We aid the Spirit's work of restoration by seeking to make *all things* better.

Creation will be transformed

In the end times, we believe the creation is not going to be replaced or destroyed, but transformed and made new. The earth is not a Titanic that is sinking to a frigid nowhere, but a tree that is growing towards a great purpose. Our task is not to jump ship and take as many souls as possible with us, but rather to tend the tree and invite others to join us in the (re)creation.

The Belgic Confession, Article Two, even places creation beside God's Word as a way to know God. "The universe," it states, "is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God." Creation is not just redeemable, it is a revelation of God.

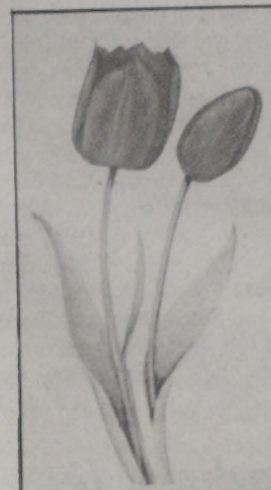
In terms of theology, it seems we definitely have something to offer to fellow Christians whose dualism leads them to despise what God has called good and beautiful. Art, geology, linguistics, computer science — all areas of learning are not compromises on the Christian's journey, but faithful manifestations of a love for God and his world.

The flesh made Word

Self-congratulation is rarely instructive, however. So I ask: If our theology is so rich in its comprehensive understanding of Christ's redemptive work — extending to the whole creation — why have we not turned out anyone like St. Francis of Assisi, someone whose daily life shouted out to world history that all the world belongs to God? Why has the Reformed community not been at the forefront of environmental care? Finally, why has the term "Creation Spirituality" been monopolized by a theologian who takes Fall/Redemption out of

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



WORLD BOOK ILLUSTRATION BY ALLIANORA ROSSE

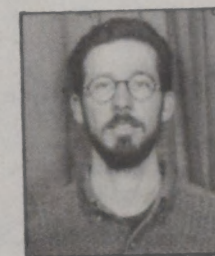
the Creation/Fall/Redemption story? (I'm talking about the popular writer Matthew Fox and his book *Original Blessing*.)

I wonder back to our iconoclastic roots. There was a deep fear in the tumult of the Reformation that paintings and sculptures in the church would lead to idolatry. Mobs of Reformed people are known to have raided churches and destroyed all the art in a

zealous rage against such "paganism." They were afraid that people might start worshipping the objects themselves rather than God, and our faith became centred only on the one book of revelation, the Bible. We became a "logocentric" tradition, a tradition focussed on a text, on words, on the written book, at the expense of the "beautiful book."

We may not be as fervent about such things today, but, as Tony Campolo's book states, we are still not sure it is possible to "rescue the earth without worshipping nature." We wonder if it is possible to see and feel God's presence in his creation without identifying his entire being with it. God's Spirit sustains the whole material world, and "we aid the Spirit's work of restoration by seeking to make *all things* better." But how serious are we about "all things"?

I live on the university campus, where there is no end to the discussion of the harm we have done to this planet. I think we have some great resources to enter the discussion and aid our fellow Christians in the struggle to bring a faith perspective to bear on the dialogue (see www.caringforcreation.ca for one example). Let's think of literal tulips this spring as we worship God together.



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

Polkinghorne surprised his colleagues when he announced that he would resign his position at Cambridge and enter the priesthood.

His decision led to wide-ranging discussions with theoretical physicists, which became the foundation for the first of many books and other writings in which Polkinghorne grapples with issues of science and theology. Those writings, as well as his extensive history of lectures and debates, has brought him a vast audience

around the world, especially among those seeking to examine the very essence of theories that unify not only the physical world, but also the entire human experience, including the role of God.

His best-known books include *The Way the World Is* (1983), a short, but detailed explanation of how a thinking person can be a Christian; *The Faith of a Physicist* (1994); and *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (1998).

Speaking after being selected

for the Templeton Prize, Polkinghorne said, "I want to take science and religion with great and equal seriousness. I see them as complementary to each other and not as rivals. The most important thing that they have in common is that both believe that there is a truth to be sought and found, a truth whose attainment comes through the pursuit of well-motivated belief."

Arts/Media

Christian animator explains why he works on *The Simpsons*

Dan Wooding

BEL AIR, CA (ANS) — Lance Wilder is the background design supervisor of *The Simpsons* television show which is made by Film ROMAN in Hollywood, and in an interview before the Christian Film & Television Commission's 10th Annual Faith & Values Awards Gala March 20, he revealed that he is not the only Christian working on the hugely popular show.

20 Christian artists work on show

"Behind the scenes, there is a Bible study that goes on and I would say about 20 churchgoing Bible-believing Christian artists are now working on *The Simpsons*," said Wilder who was attending the star-studded event with his wife Maria.

Wilder explained how he got the job on *The Simpsons*. "I went to the Rhode Island School of Design and I graduated in 1990, and the show premiered back in December of 1989," said Wilder. "I was taking animation and illustration and I was a huge fan of the show. I knew it was going to be something big. However, I never thought it would last this long, but I wanted to be



ALTAVISTA.COM IMAGE

part of it. I really thought that it was something that could last maybe one or two years or so. I took a few animation tests, but I failed the first group. So I asked them what was right and wrong, and I followed directions and returned it to them within 48 hours. And they hired me. The day after I

graduated, I moved out here. That was going on 12 years ago. As a matter of fact, we just started our 14th season three days ago."

When asked if he, as a Christian, was able to influence anything on *The Simpsons*, Wilder said, "Some things I am. I am able to put in my creative bit according

to what the writers have written. I certainly put in things that are appropriate to the show or the characters they have written or whatever the episode happens to be focusing on. Sometimes I have a say and sometimes I don't, like anyone on a show that involves about 80 to 100 artists and 15 writers."

He said that one of his favorite characters is Side Show Bob, the evil genius played by Kelsey Grammar. "It looks like we are going to be doing another one of those episodes. We have already done seven in the past with him and we are going to be doing a new one in the upcoming season as well."

Christians shouldn't abandon Hollywood

When asked if he would ever wish to leave *The Simpsons*, he replied, "I'd never leave as long as the scripts are really top-notch. The writers always joke about the fact that they have to come up with 22 new ideas for a new season, and yet every season we have some of the best episodes that we have ever done. There are so many great ideas and so many characters in the show. We have not only 10 or 20 main characters, but we have about

200 secondary characters that are my favorites and seem to be some of the fans favorites as well."

He then answered the critics who condemn the series. "I think you get out of it what you put in. There are a lot of good-hearted not only Christian people, but people who really want to say something, write about something or produce something that is worthwhile and not just gratuitous sex and violence. There are so many wonderful stories about different people, religion and cultures that can be uplifting and positive."

"That's one of the things that I love about *The Simpsons* and personally one of the things I love about good television and good filmmaking, whether it is animated or not, is just working with so many wonderful talented people who care about doing something here in Hollywood that has some benefit for people. If Christians with good values abandon this place, just like any other business, you are going to get garbage."

Dan Wooding is an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times).

Movieguide publisher says there has been huge turnaround in Hollywood

Dan Wooding

BEL AIR, Calif. (ANS) — Dr. Ted Baehr, founder and publisher of *Movieguide* and head of the Christian Film and Television Commission ministry (CFTVC), says there has been a "huge turnaround" in Hollywood over the past 12 months.

In an interview before CFTVC's 10th Annual *Movieguide* Faith & Values Awards Gala March 20 at the Skirball Cultural Center in Bel Air, Calif., he said, "In the past year there were over 98 movies with positive Christian content. This is incredible as there are only about 260 movies released every year by the Hollywood entertainment industry. This means that about 40 per cent of the movies have overt Christian content...and, they keep coming!"

"This weekend, we have another movie with great Christian content opening called *The Rookie*, in a few weeks, the Christian allegory *Joshua* opens, and now playing are *A Walk to Remember*, *Italian for Beginners*, *Count of Monte Cristo*, *Hometown Legend*, *Joshua*, *The Climb*, *We Were Soldiers*, *Hart's War*, ...and that doesn't include the movies that played over from last year... and

all the wonderful moral and family movies like *Clockstoppers*, *The Time Machine*, *Ice Age*, *Big Fat Liar* ... so we are blessed."

Baehr continued, "When I started out 17 years ago publishing *Movieguide* magazine, there was only one movie with positive Christian content — *The Trip to Bountiful*. I just did an interview with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and, at that time, they were about the only people producing pro-Christian movies — through their Worldwide Pictures company. Media Fellowship was the only known Christian fellowship group in Hollywood. Those were the days when you thought the church would never change its negative attitude and that Hollywood also would not change, but we have seen a great transformation in both camps."

Redeem every area of life

When asked what he would say to the Christians around the world who think movies are evil, he said, "Christians are called to redeem every area of life. Movies are just a tool of communication. You can hurt somebody with a hammer or build a church. I am glad to see more and more people being re-

demptive and not just negative nabobs, but really reclaiming the territory, because all of creation is moaning and groaning for God's people to walk out as more than conquerors in Christ Jesus and take every thought captive for Him with joy, love and peace."

'Christian Oscars'

Following the interview, Baehr launched what many have called "The Christian Oscars." *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Princess Diaries*, *Monster's Inc.*, and *Shrek* were among the winners at the 10th annual *Movieguide* Faith & Values Awards Gala and Report to the Entertainment Industry held Wednesday, March 20, in Bel Air, California.

Pax TV, the seventh largest, most family-friendly and most Christian-friendly television network in the United States was the big winner, taking home the \$25,000 John Templeton Foundation Epiphany Prize for Most Inspiring Television Program in 2001 for *The Miracle of the Cards*, the Swiss America Prize for the "Some Gave All" episode of the TV series *Doc* and the Grace Prize for Most Inspirational Television Acting to Catherine Oxenberg for

her role as a Christian mother in Pax's *The Miracle of the Cards*.

The star-studded event also saw *The Body*, starring Antonio Banderas as a Roman Catholic priest, win the \$25,000 Templeton Foundation Epiphany Prize for Most Inspiring Movie in 2001, and Whoopi Goldberg win the Grace Prize for Most Inspirational Movie Acting for her role as a committed Christian in *Kingdom Come*.

Below is a list of the winners:

Best 2001 films for families:

1. *The Princess Diaries*
2. *Monsters, Inc.*
3. *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*
4. *Shadow Magic*
5. *Spy Kids*
6. *Shrek* (Best Film for Older Children and Teenagers)
7. *The Dish*
8. *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*

Best 2001 films for mature audiences:

1. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*
2. *A Beautiful Mind*
3. *An American Rhapsody*
4. *I Am Sam*
5. *Jurassic Park III*

6. *On The Line*
7. *Pearl Harbor*
8. *Kandahar*

Epiphany prize for most inspiring movie in 2001:

The Body, distributed by Lions Gate Films/TriStar/Sony

Epiphany prize for most inspiring TV program in 2001:

The Miracle of the Cards, broadcast by Pax TV

Grace prize for most inspirational movie actor:

Whoopi Goldberg for *Kingdom Come*

Grace prize for most inspirational television actor:

Catherine Oxenberg for *The Miracle of the Cards*.

Editor's Note: Dr. Ted Baehr, author of The Media-wise Family and Hollywood's Reel of Fortune, is founder and chairman of the Christian Film & Television Commission ministry and publisher and editor-in-chief of Movieguide: A Family Guide to Movies and Entertainment.

Church

Christian refugees in Cambodia can resettle in U.S.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (Compass) — According to statements by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs published in early April, the right of third country asylum for about 1,000 of Vietnam's Montagnards in Cambodia has now been guaranteed.

On March 2, Cambodian authorities forcibly repatriated 63 predominantly Christian Montagnards from Vietnam who were seeking asylum in Cambodia. Vietnam's tribal peoples are collectively known as Montagnards. Another 61 refugees from a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) camp who reportedly had "volunteered" to return were also repatriated. But Cambodian and Vietnamese authorities refused to allow the UNHCR any participating role, in violation of a Jan. 21 agreement.

Other refugees in danger

Observers feared that if international condemnation and consequences were not swift and meaningful, the fate of the remaining 1,000 Montagnard refugees in two camps would be sealed and they would all be forced to return.

But a March 31 News Agency release datelined Hanoi stated, "Vietnam holds that the problem of Vietnam's Tay Nguyen ethnic minority people illegally crossing the border to Cambodia should be quickly solved in the spirit of humanism, a Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said." It further quotes the spokesperson as saying, "Those who want to return home should be repatriated with the help of Vietnam, Cambodia and the UNHCR, and those who want to be settled down to a third country should be handled properly."

In Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Sen, while speaking at the dedication of a new Buddhist temple March 30, said, "Today, the royal government of Cambodia will offer an opportunity for the Vietnamese hill tribe refugees to go and resettle in the United States."

This statement was the final Cambodian approval of an offer by the U.S. on March 26 to grant asylum to these Montagnard refugees. "This was a neutral decision by our government to fulfil its humanitarian duty in international affairs and end this problem. Cambodia will close the camps completely and will no longer allow newcomers to resettle in Mondolkiri and Ratanakiri province," Hun Sen said.

Superficially, these developments appear to settle the diplo-

matic firestorm that erupted over the situation of the ethnic minority tribal people who fled to Cambodia over religious persecution and other abuses in Vietnam's highlands last year. Yet observers say the situation in Vietnam's Central Highlands remains largely unchanged.

Many tribal Christian leaders have reported a widespread crackdown against them beginning last Christmas, when celebration of this main Christian holy day was widely forbidden.

Massive crackdown

One year ago, Vietnam's tribal minorities shocked authorities when thousands marched on government buildings in Central Highland cities to protest a lack of religious freedom and the illegal loss of much of their traditional lands. Vietnamese authorities responded with a massive military and security crackdown. Many tribals fled their homes for the forest during the crackdown, some disappeared, and more than 1,600 — almost all Christians — crossed the border into Cambodia's Mondolkiri and Ratanakiri provinces.

Vietnam immediately pressured Cambodia to return the refugees. Many were turned over to Vietnamese authorities by Cambodian police for a bounty. Several hundred were returned. Following strong international complaints about these human rights abuses, the UNHCR set up a camp in each of the two provinces and provided at least some protection. Refugees continued to come in modest numbers, fleeing persecution that was well-documented.

Late last year, more than a dozen Montagnards in Vietnam received harsh prison sentences for allegedly leading the demonstrations or for organizing flights to Cambodia. Vietnamese authorities relentlessly interrogated many Christian leaders. They organized meetings at which Christians were told to sign affidavits renouncing their faith and reconverting to their animistic past. As a symbolic act to prove their sincerity, some Christians were reportedly made to drink a repugnant cocktail of blood from freshly sacrificed animals mixed with rice liquor.

Amnesty criticizes agreement

On Jan. 21, the UNHCR signed a tripartite agreement with Vietnam and Cambodia to repatriate the refugees immediately. Human rights organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch objected to the lack of guarantees for the refugees' security.

The document does not use the words "voluntary" or "refugee" or "asylum seeker" or even "person of concern." It did not guarantee the UNHCR free access to the areas of repatriation or follow-up visits.

Critics of the agreement said the UNHCR did not take seriously the evidence presented about religious human rights abuses against Vietnam's minorities and had failed to live up to its protection mandate. Some observers close to the situation even accused the UNHCR of anti-Christian bias.

After being allowed one brief visit to the Central Highlands in early February, the UNHCR assured those who raised questions that Vietnam had promised no reprisals against returnees for illegal departure. In the meantime, the UNHCR, against its normal practice, allowed Vietnamese authorities to bring refugees' relatives into the camps to try to convince their family members to return

voluntarily. Once out of earshot of the authorities, some of the visitors reportedly told their relatives not to return under any circumstances.

Expressing significant fears

Nevertheless, the UNHCR announced 109 "volunteers" returned on Feb. 19. In fact, 15 were repatriated. Vietnamese authorities, apparently concerned about international criticism, allowed some international reporters to visit the repatriates. In spite of attempts to control meetings, the repatriates managed to express significant fears to the reporters.

UNHCR staff members were prevented by Cambodian authorities from going where they needed to go in order to prepare for more repatriations. On the same day, Vietnamese authorities, who were allowed into the Mondolkiri camp by the UNHCR, threatened the refugees and announced an April 30 deadline for their "voluntary"

repatriation. When some refugees objected, Cambodian police with electric truncheons waded in to subdue them in full view of UNHCR officials, sources said.

On February 25, Hanoi announced that it was sending 2,300 troops into the Central Highlands to educate people "against plots to get young people to flee to Cambodia" and "maintain infrastructure in 258 villages."

Protestant observers familiar with the situation say that until Vietnam begins to address the real injustices faced by its minorities, especially religious persecution, problems will continue.

Vietnam consistently denies that Montagnards face difficulties. On March 28, the BBC, quoting a Voice of Vietnam broadcast referring to Foreign Ministry spokesperson Phan Thuy Thanh, said, "Ms. Thanh stressed fabrications of any persecution were nothing more than baseless assertions and products of the imagination."

Jewish-Arab turmoil squeezes Israeli, Palestinian Christians

Mark Kelly

BETHLEHEM (BP) — When fleeing Palestinian fighters forced their way into Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity April 2, Israeli soldiers found themselves laying siege to one of Christianity's holiest sites.

The standoff symbolizes the predicament of Christian believers in the Middle East and demonstrates the need for urgent prayer, say some missions workers in the region.

Christians worry about suicide bombings

Israeli followers of Christ worry about the daily threat of suicide bombings and cast anxious glances at Arabs who move freely in their midst. Palestinian Christians can't travel to jobs that provide for their families and cringe when the Israeli army begins another round of shelling.

Turmoil in the always-volatile Middle East escalated rapidly after Palestinian suicide bombers began striking Israel daily, including a March 27 attack that killed 22 people during a Passover feast. Israel sent tanks to occupy Palestinian Authority headquarters and invaded Palestinian towns in search of terrorists.

Jewish and Palestinian believers in the region are calling Christians to fervently pray that God would intervene in the crisis,



Inside Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity.

Baptist workers say.

"Easter attendance at churches in the region was far beyond anything they've ever had," said Mark Snowden, a spokesman for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. "In spite of this turmoil and incredible stress, Christian workers are finding that people are requesting 'Jesus' films and asking questions about Jesus more than they ever have."

In one instance, an Arab man walked into an Israeli congregation — much to the consternation of members who didn't recognize him, Snowden said. After a brief conversation revealed he had no ill

intentions, however, the man joined the congregation for Resurrection Day worship.

"We praise God for that," Snowden said. "Christians in Israel don't want to alienate anyone, especially Arabs who are seeking answers from Christians."

At the same time, Palestinian fighters are using a predominantly Christian town as a base for launching attacks on Israeli troops, he said. When Israeli soldiers retaliate, their shells destroy the homes of innocent Christians.

Three Israeli shells struck the home of a Palestinian who works for a Christian Bible college, leaving the terrified family thankful they suffered only cuts and bruises.

"Palestinian believers want other Christians to pray that God will provide basic necessities like food and shelter that they can't provide for themselves right now," Snowden said. "Believers in Israel want us to pray that they would not succumb to a spirit of fear but instead would be sensitive to the opportunities God gives them to share Christ. And everyone wants us to pray for peace."

Church

The geese are back

"For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come,

the [honking of geese] is heard in our land."

Song of Songs 2:11, adapted.

The geese are back.

I live in a two-bedroom apartment overlooking a pond. From my balcony I can watch squirrels, rabbits, robins, and, of course, geese.

The geese have chosen the little pond by me and a larger one near the entrance to this complex as their home. Last year I watched three different pairs of geese rear their families. I called them the Protestant Geese and the Catholic geese. The Protestant pair only had two goslings toddling around after them; one of the Catholic couples had seven, the other eight.

The goslings were fluffy little things at the beginning of the summer. They would herd around their parents while on shore and then stretch out behind them on the water, cutting a series of wakes in the surface of the pond. I would walk my dog down by the pond and hear the parents warning their offspring of our approach. Honk. Honk. Honk, honk, honk. HONK! HONK! And with that, they would push off shore and into the centre of the pond where no harm could come to them, at least not from my golden retriever.

Geese are loud!

Over the summer, the goslings grew larger. The fluffy coverings gave way to feathers, and the feathers themselves grew darker. They still waddled around close to their parents, but it became harder and harder to tell which of the geese were the parents and which were the recently hatched.

By the time they flew south, they all looked alike: big, strong birds with dark necks and white markings. And they all sounded alike: loud. Geese are loud. And against the aluminum-sided buildings which surround the ponds, their honks

Chapter & Verse

Rev. Mary S. Hulst



reverberate and startle.

That's how I knew they were back. At dawn on one weekend morning, the honks woke me up. The sun was just beginning to cast my room in a soft glow and I was slowly coming out of unconsciousness when I was rattled awake by HONK! HONK!

The geese are back, I thought to myself. And although it was early and I was awake prematurely, there was some comfort in that thought.

Ready for spring

This hasn't been the most beautiful spring here in West Michigan. It's been cold and snowy and cloudy. We've been teased by one day at 50 degrees F. and then plunged back into a string of 30s. The winter coats are still out, the boots are still by the back door, and the scrapers and brushes remain in our cars.

We've lamented this, we folks who live here. We are ready for spring. Our bodies long for it; long for warm days and nights when we can sleep with the windows open. We're looking forward to long walks and bike rides, trips to the park and picnics. We're ready for spring.

It isn't here yet, at least not according to us humans. But according to the geese, spring is here, it has sprung, and it's time to get about the business of rearing more goslings and honking at dogs and carving long V's across the surface of quiet ponds.

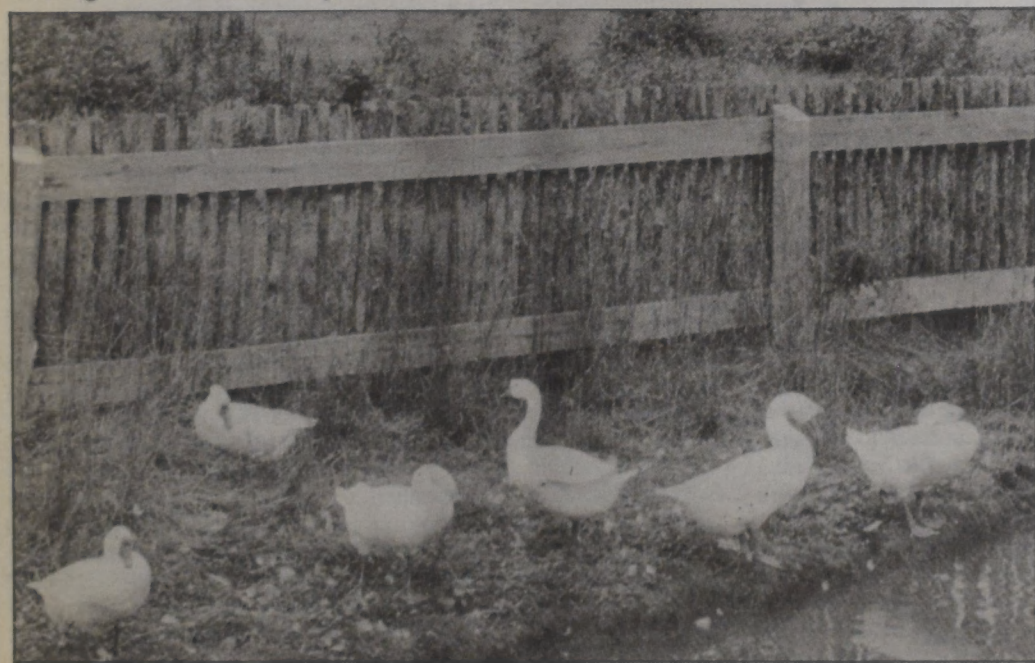
So although I still zip up and glove up and bundle up before I go out, I have a sign of spring right outside my window.

The geese are back.

Spring is here. Thanks be to God!



Rev. Mary S. Hulst is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.



Geese in King's Landing, New Brunswick.

GRACE DEUTSCH & AVANTHIA SWAN

Church of the Nativity serves as place of refuge for fleeing Palestinians

JERUSALEM (ENI) — On April 2, about 100 Palestinian militants and police as well as civilians took refuge inside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the place where tradition holds that Jesus was born.

The Palestinians were hiding from Israeli troops, who launched an offensive against Bethlehem and other towns on the West Bank.

Priests at the church said that Palestinian police and militiamen forced their way into the church. As tanks surrounded the building, they called on the international community to intervene. Many of the Palestinians besieged in the Church of the Nativity had earlier engaged in running battles with Israeli forces, who fired at them from helicopter gunships and tank-mounted machine guns. Several dead Palestinians, some said to be gunmen, lay sprawled in Bethlehem's Manger Square, just outside the church. Israeli forces later allowed the bodies to be removed.

Doors of church exploded

Israel promised that it would not deliberately fire on religious structures, but on April 3 an explosion destroyed the doors of the church. Israeli troops, however, did not enter the building, and a spokesman claimed it was just Palestinian propaganda.

Bethlehem resident Nicholas Andonia, a Greek Orthodox Christian, who lives a few metres from the church, one of Christianity's holiest sites, described the scene to ENI in a telephone interview.

"Tanks are beside our house and they are shooting," he said. "The [Israeli] Apache [helicopter

gunships] are over our houses and they are shooting at the mosque [across from the church] and people in Manger Square. It is the first time that we see this."

Andonia said that the Omar Mosque across Manger Square was in flames on Sunday and that Israeli forces had prevented fire-trucks from reaching the scene.

Churches must remain places of refuge

Anglican Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, based in Jerusalem, said that a church could never be closed to those seeking refuge. "If we churchmen don't allow people to seek refuge in our holy places, where would they seek refuge in times of trouble?" he said.

He and other church leaders, including the Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land, Archbishop Michel Sabbah, were prevented by Israel from entering Bethlehem recently.

Israel declared the area a closed military zone, and said that no one was allowed to enter Bethlehem, not even reporters.

Despite increasing international pressure on Israel to pull its troops out of Palestinian areas, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Aryeh Mekel told ENI: "The campaign will continue as long as it takes, which means until we dismantle the infrastructure of [Palestinian] terror."

"Since the entire West Bank has become one big terrorist base, led by Arafat, we have to go in basically everywhere, catch the terrorists, arrest them, bring them to justice in Israel, confiscate the weapons and we are determined to do so."

Sudan agrees to seek peace in the south

KHARTOUM, Sudan (EP) — Representatives of Sudan's northern government declared that it is seeking a peaceful resolution to the decades-old civil war between the Muslim forces from the north and predominantly Christian and animist populations in the south. Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Sudan minister of foreign affairs, declared that a recent agreement made between the northern regime and the U.S. is proof that north Sudan wants peace. According to the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan, the agreement, signed March 10,

would "provide all necessary mechanisms for the protection of the civilian population and the civilian infrastructure in Sudan."

It is uncertain if the government, headquartered in the capitol of Khartoum, is serious about protecting Sudanese civilians. In February, the northern regime allegedly led air raids on U.N. food installations in the south, killing civilians and damaging property of humanitarian aid groups. Dr. John Garang, leader of the southern rebel army, has not signed the agreement.

Family/Church Life

A life — and a family — transformed by loss

Lisa M. Petsche

It's amazing how what initially seems like a major crisis can sometimes end up being just what you needed to get your priorities straight. I wouldn't have believed it at the time, though.

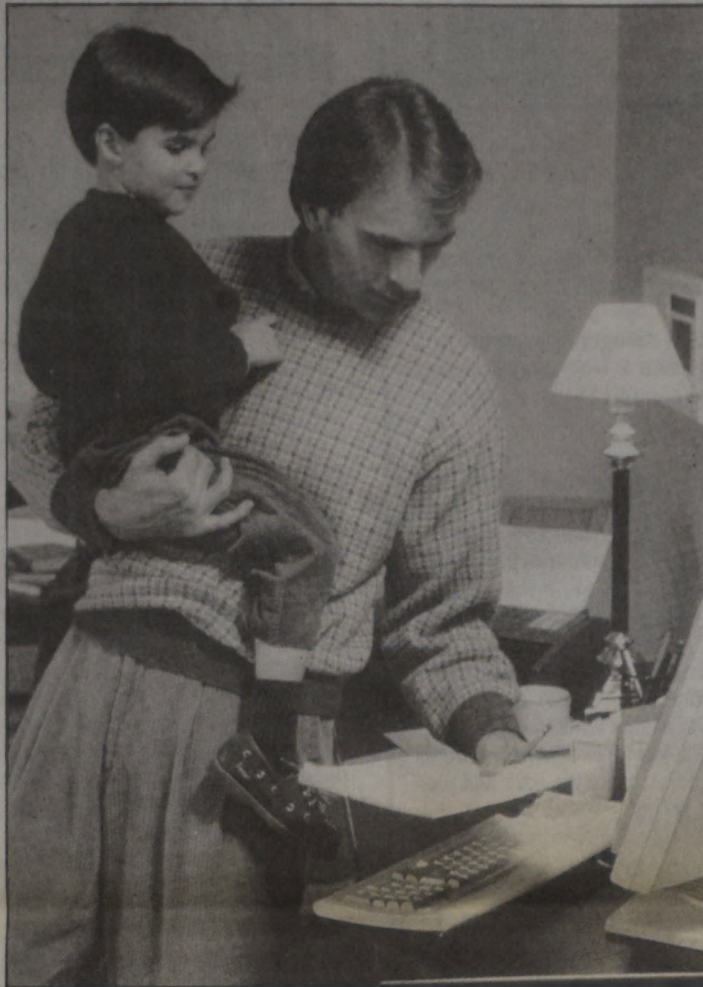
I'm referring to my husband's job loss a couple of years ago, due to workplace restructuring. The anniversary is this month.

He'd been with the company for over a decade — longer than I'd known him. His job necessitated a two-hour, round-trip commute and long, demanding workdays. Originally it also involved travel; the last two years he was continually on-call via pager. He was never home for supper on weekdays, arriving just as the kids were going to bed. He'd kiss them goodnight, eat leftovers and then flop on the couch, usually dozing off right away, only to rise early the next morning and head out on the highway again.

A virtual single parent

Since I had to arrange for a babysitter in order to go anywhere solo, I usually declined invitations to evening events. For all intents and purposes I was a single parent five days a week, and sometimes on weekends.

The situation was an increasing source of concern for me. But my husband was so immersed in his work pattern — and surrounded by others for whom it was also the norm — that he didn't really see how much it was negatively affecting us, individually, as a couple and as a family. Being away from



COMSTOCK

Suddenly he was home more than I was, accompanying our children to and from school, helping with homework, preparing dinner, chauffeuring the kids to swimming lessons and soccer practice.

home a lot, and returning exhausted and often stressed, was just a fact of life for him.

While I wished for a change, I never imagined it would occur the way it did.

At the time my husband lost his job, our children were ages three, four and seven. He was the primary wage earner, while I was employed half-time.

We lost a lot of sleep worrying about our future and what we should do. It was a very distressing time, and we prayed daily for guidance.

My husband ended up using a chunk of his severance pay to upgrade his skills, something he hadn't previously had the time or energy for. He attended school on weekday afternoons and did freelance consulting to help pay the bills.

By the time his course was over, he had decided to pursue home-based self-employment, which has ended up being the equivalent of a part-time job.

Amazed at transformation

Suddenly he was home more than I was, accompanying our children to and from school, helping with homework, preparing dinner, chauffeuring the kids to swimming lessons and soccer practice, and even joining the school council. He can't imagine life any other way now. Friends and former co-workers are amazed at the transformation.

Meanwhile, I continue with my part-time hospital job, having expanded my freelance writing to supplement our income. At least one of us (often both) is always there for our kids.

The trade-off? Our income is roughly half of what it used to be. Many who know us wonder how

we manage financially and admit they wouldn't be prepared to make the same material sacrifices, even though they might admire what we've done.

Certainly we're living a lot simpler now (including owning only one vehicle — a rare phenomenon in today's families) and are extremely careful about spending. There is much less room for non-necessities, and we have to be patient about saving for them.

The funny thing is, my husband and I never considered ourselves big spenders, having shunned status symbols and avoided credit card debt, for instance. On the other hand, there was a financial cost associated with our lifestyle, in terms of transportation and child care expenses and conveniences like take-out food, dry cleaning and housecleaning service.

Nonetheless, we've learned a lot about financial management and planning, and especially about distinguishing wants from needs.

While initially the idea of living on less was anxiety-provoking, the gradual realization that we don't need nearly as much as we'd thought has been liberating. We're no longer tied to a lifestyle that exacts a high price in terms of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

We now gauge success by how little we need to live rather than how much we have to spend, and by the amount and quality of time our family spends together.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three, social worker and freelance writer.

Warmly welcoming those who visit . . .

Frank DeVries

"(The pastor) then introduced two articles on 'church-hopping,' which is an increasingly common trend in churches. After studying this phenomenon, George Barna concludes that one in six worshippers attends two or more churches on a rotating basis. More than ever, today's Christians have a consumer mentality towards worship so that 'church loyalty is a casualty.' Some churches deny this trend exists; others do nothing; some just don't worry about it. At (this church) we seek to deal with this trend by requiring members to sign a covenant that spells out what it means to be a vital member of a healthy spiritual, Christ-centred community..."

The above is an excerpt from an elders' report taken from a CRC Sunday worship bulletin. It largely represents the rationale for a

course that prospective as well as current church members must take in order to become or stay full-fledged members of that CRC congregation. Many CRCs both in the U.S. and in Canada require new members to take such a course, and then must sign a so-called "Membership Covenant" before they can be accepted as full members.

Members-to-be must promise to abide by a number of instructions. Some of these are:

- I will protect the unity of my church by refusing to gossip;
- I will share the responsibility of my church by warmly welcoming those who visit;
- I will support the testimony of my church by:
 - * attending faithfully
 - * living a godly life
 - * giving regularly

Apparently the course is an off-shoot, revised and adapted by local

congregations, of the well-known Saddleback Church in California. Although there may well be some merit to its 'baseball diamond' model, and although under certain circumstances and in some instances a CRC may benefit from such a course for new members, there are problems with it.

Commitment to a church can't be legislated

First, the idea of passing a course and signing a "Membership Covenant" in order to become a member of any CRC seems redundant. Both CRC practice and procedure have been in place for a long time and so far have been deemed quite sufficient. It is difficult to understand that there's now a need to put in place a signed statement as a condition for membership.

Second, even when such a

"covenant" is signed, it cannot possibly assure the effect desired. It can never guarantee the responsibility, level of ministry, or ultimate commitment of a new member anymore than what is currently in place. Love for a church or commitment to it is not something that can be legislated. Love and commitment are always matters of the heart, and ultimately have to do with our love of God. It is only that kind of love, that kind of commitment, that can remedy or even prevent sporadic attendance or minimal tithing.

Third, nowhere in the Membership Covenant is there mention of a commitment by the church hierarchy or its members towards the new member. Although s/he promises to comport her- or himself in a certain manner, there is no mention in this covenant as to what the church will do for him or, for that

matter, what the church will do to her if s/he defaults on the signed agreement.

Contrived, artificial

Fourth, the course is written and composed in a strait-jacket of alliteration and cutesy phraseology, making it seem contrived and artificial. All sections of the course are loaded with phrases like:

Our Salvation/ Our Statements/ Our Strategy/ Our Structure, and, God's Purpose/ God's People/ God's Principles/ God's Profession/ God's Power, and,

We aim to grow ...warmer through fellowship (membership) ...deeper through discipleship (maturity) ...stronger through worship (magnify) ...broader through service (ministry) ...larger through evangelism (mission)...

Continued on page 16...

Agriculture

Keepers of each other

During the figure skating scandal at the winter Olympics, CBC reporter Brian Williams observed that if misdemeanor could happen it would. Granted, morality cannot be legislated. However, systems of accountability will certainly help.

There are many examples of both elected and appointed officials brazenly taking advantage of public trust. Take, for example, basketball refereeing.

Referees vs. the game

Last month I attended the BCCAA (Colleges league) provincial basketball championship game in Abbotsford, B.C. and watched the sad state of the refereeing of college basketball games reach an all-time low. The head referee made it painfully obvious he was well aware that he could change the course of a game through his authority to penalize.

Only a couple of minutes into the game, Ryan Porter, All-Canadian post for the underdogs, the Cariboo Sun Demons, was slapped with two penalties. And this is a young man well-known for gentlemanly conduct. Something smelled out on the court right from the beginning and never went away.

Heavy psychological damage

The opposing team, the Fraser Valley Cascades, led at the beginning, but even though playing a number of rookies, Cariboo rallied and led by the end of the half.

Only minutes into the second half, Porter was rocked with two more penalties and a lecture from the head referee. Porter was essentially out of the game, thus inflicting heavy psychological damage on a normally plucky team.

Fraser Valley, noted for rough play anyway, took advantage of referee prejudice and hacked their way to victory. Fraser could have won on talent and size alone but was obviously out to "get" Porter and his team and, inexplicably, so was the head referee. During the year, in regular league play, Cariboo had been the only team to beat Fraser, and they could have done it again were they given a fair chance. It would have been a beauty of a game to watch, but the referees robbed it.

College basketball, by default, has fallen into allowing the referees to make the rules, changing them at will from one game to the next. It was terribly frustrating to sit helplessly watching a vindictive skew of what could have been an exhilarating match-up, the culmination of a year's hard work.

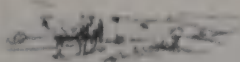
In striking contrast to the referee's assessment of Porter and his team, the league named Porter to the #1 all-star team and his coach received the excellence in coaching award. Why does the league allow referees to work with virtually no accountability? The only obvious conclusion is that no one wants to take the initiative to change that. People are happy to go along with things the way they are, rather than stick their necks out to make a change for the better.

Government compliance with oil patch insinuation

A week later, I attended a public meeting addressed by Andrew Nikiforuk, author of *Saboteur*, a book about Wiebo Ludwig's tussle with the oil and gas industry. He wove a frustrating tale about

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



how the province and the oil and gas industry are in collusion to extract fossil fuel for a quick buck. In the process, they are polluting and poisoning Alberta.

Much higher incidence of MS in Alberta

Hydrogen sulfide, for instance, a constituent of sour gas often released into the air, is a poison affecting the central nervous system. Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a term applied to a collection of neurological diseases. The worldwide incidence of MS is five per 100,000. For Canada it is 74, Alberta, 313, and Edmonton, 329.

It is well known that respiratory disease incidence also is high in Alberta. Ft. McMurray drugstores have long rows of shelf space devoted to asthma medications. The schools of Sherwood Park, downwind from Edmonton's refinery row, have an unusually high rate of asthma among their students.

Cancer rates have been observed to be high in areas of high oil and gas activity. Identifiable carcinogens such as benzene and toluene reside in raw natural gas.

Farmers and ranchers downwind from wells and gas plants observe many of the same problems in their herds that they and their neighbors experience.

A system for better accountability

The basketball/referee situation could be greatly eased by the league taking responsibility to insist on accountability from the referees for fairly enforcing the rules.

Government, too, must take responsibility by instituting a system of accountability to protect the province from industrial ravages. Citizens are apathetic because they have implicit trust in the premier, or they feel they can make no difference, or until they experience personal hurt they won't act. Oil companies aren't going to clean up their act if they are not told to and government, at present, isn't going to insist because of a too cozy relationship.

A more representative method of assigning seats in the legislature would be a major influence for accountability. Seats assigned according to how many votes a party received best reflects voter intention. The system currently in effect has resulted in a party with 50 per cent of the votes taking 90 per cent of the seats because each seat is individually contested by a multitude of parties.

The governing party in power now could show good faith by at least allowing a plebiscite on proportional representation.

Apathy and irresponsibility are robbing us of significant enjoyment of life. We are doing it to ourselves by not insisting that those in power institute change.



Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

Free trade: a level field that levels family farms

Elbert van Donkersgoed

Farm families can be forgiven if they are tired of hearing the promises of the free traders among us. More than a decade ago, agriculture was drawn into trade agreements — first the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, then the North American Free Trade Agreement followed by the World Trade Organization. Farm families were told that freer trade would be good for them. It would bring prosperity to their farms.

Each agreement renewed the promise: trade agreements will open markets for your commodities. More markets will bring you better prices.

How does the world really work?

First, the promise of prosperity is always in the future. At the new round of trade talks recently launched at Doha, the rhetoric played on: give us a level playing field and access to more markets; stop export subsidies. The fine print reiterated: farm entrepreneurs should reinvent their enterprises to capitalize on the new opportunities that freer trade will deliver and so participate in that brighter future. We have been reinventing ourselves for a decade but the markets for our grain crops are worse than ever.

Second: trade agreements do much more than create a level playing field. The removal of trade barriers — tariffs, duties or quotas — is turning a billion farmers around the globe into competitors. Every access won, every duty cut, every tariff removed, is a recipe for greater competition among farmers, and for consequently lower market prices.

Third, what if farmers getting a fair price for their products is all about enough market clout to set or negotiate a fair price? The disappearance of economic borders has launched a wave of agri-business mergers. A few agri-business

corporations now dominate both the supply of farm inputs and the buying of farm production, reducing the competition between them. Trade agreements have shifted marketplace clout dramatically from farmers to agribusiness firms. Freer trade will enshrine this loss of market power.

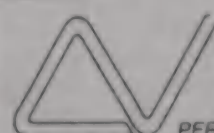
No net benefit to agriculture

Fourth, there has been no net benefit to agriculture from the trade agreements to date. Yes, food exports from Ontario are up. So we are selling more, maybe even working harder. But do the real test — check out total net income for all the farm businesses in Ontario — and you will see farm profits continuing to decline. Each year we ship about one per cent more physical product out of Ontario's farm gates to the tables of the world, but we have less left over after expenses.

These are the real consequences of freer trade: farmers ship in competition with a billion farmers around the world to a few buyers who do not compete and are rewarded with lower prices. For farmers, the playing field with input suppliers and commodity buyers has become more unlevel.

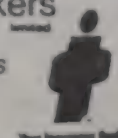
Elbert van Donkersgoed is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Canada. Corner Post can be heard weekly on CFCO Radio, Chatham and CKNX Radio, Wingham, Ontario. This was the Corner Post for March 22, 2002 and it is

archived on the website of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario: www.christianfarmers.org. CFFO is supported by 4,500 family farmers across the province of Ontario, Canada.



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Opinion

A response to 'The Runner who did not grow weary'

Evan W. Runner

I want to thank Dr. Hart for his article in the April 8 issue of *Christian Courier* regarding the death of my father, Dr. H. Evan Runner, and his passing into Glory. But despite what I believe were good intentions on his part, I was bothered by some things which I felt were more implied than said in it.

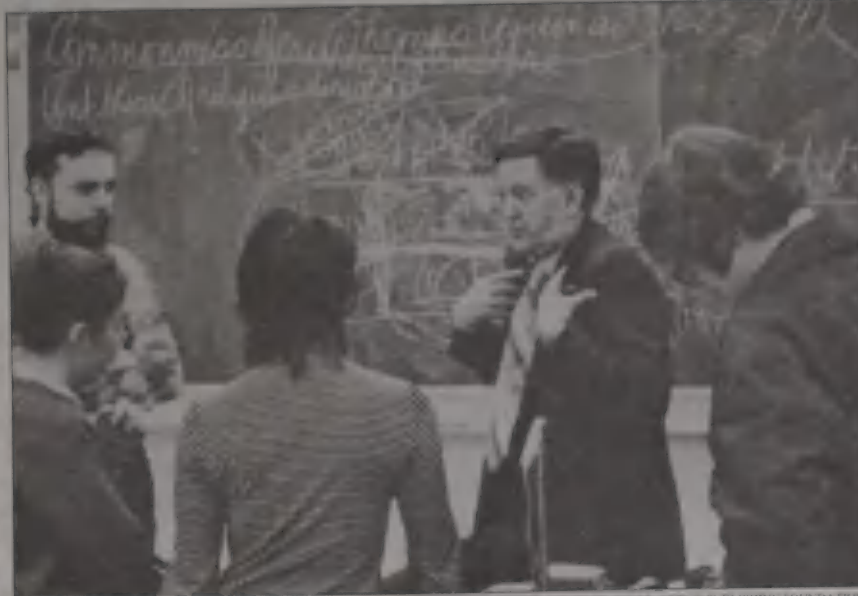
Most troubling to me were the three separate references to Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff. Now I have nothing against Wolterstorff *per se*, and I have been assured by those who know him that he is personally a sincere, devoted Christian man, so *that* isn't the issue. But those who know the history of my Dad and of Wolterstorff know that their respective works were at virtually opposite ends of the spectrum of Christian philosophizing. When Hart says Dad "focused on getting us to grasp with our hearts what Nicholas Wolterstorff calls 'Calvinism as world reformatory religion,'" it sounds to my ear, at least, like Dad was promoting some idea espoused by Wolterstorff.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Hart speaks of the waves of controversy surrounding Dad's teaching, and how a speech of Wolterstorff's in 1974 applied "the oil of wisdom" to those waves, thus causing them to die down. That was certainly preferable to opponents of Dad's teaching, but was it a good thing for the visibility of what Dad had to say? I do not think so.

Then Hart continues by saying that Wolterstorff had an "affinity with the world reformatory spirit of Calvinism" (which, I am told, is a phrase which Wolterstorff used to refer to the ideas of the reformational philosophy embraced by my Dad), and that that, along with other factors, "contributed to the formation of other world reformatory expressions in the world of Christian academia." Hart cites Calvin College's "Christian Perspectives on Learning" course and its Calvin Center as examples of this.

Where can I begin?

Where can I begin with this? I recently was given an undated manuscript by a Dr. A. Keizer which explains Wolterstorff's ideas regarding



Dr. H. Evan Runner engaged in a dynamic discussion with students.

Christian philosophizing as being centred and based on man, as opposed to the principles of the reformational philosophy taught by my Dad as being centred on God and based on the Scriptures. According to that, there can certainly be no *affinity* (a relationship characterized by attraction) between Wolterstorff's ideas and Dad's work. I quote from the conclusion of Dr. Keizer's manuscript:

"Evidently the reformational philosophy, which in God's providential appointment took its rise in the midst of the spiritual distress

sweeping over the 20th century, does not belong to the Christian philosophy for which Wolterstorff asks our attention. That [reformational] philosophy opened the eyes of Christians to [all belonging to the realm of science] being grounded in the supra-scientific (that which transcends science, E.R.) Word of God and of [all belonging to the realm of 'theory'] being grounded in 'non-theory', that is, in the religiously permeated primary everyday knowledge (what Dad called 'pre-scientific' knowledge, E.R.) of God's creation.... Wolterstorff's theory of science grasps nothing of all this. It attempts to hold the humanistic spirit in check with the powerless subjectivistic 'control beliefs' of the 'authentic Christian commitment' composed by man himself. All it has done is to replace autonomous humanistic man with the autonomous Christian."

Quieting the storm

That, I think, says pretty much what the differences were between what Dad taught and what Wolterstorff thought. And as for Calvin College's CPOL course and many other factors which Hart refers to as "blessings related in one way or another to Runner's inspiration," it is my own belief that many such things were set up as mere appeasements to quiet the storm generated by Dad's teachings, and in fact do not reflect the spirit of

Dad's teaching at all. Hart says it well when he writes, "though [Runner] himself would have given them a different character!"

Another thing with which I would like to take issue is Hart's statement that Dad made "a self-conscious decision to put scholarship on a back burner." What my Dad *did* do with his life, was to take a little known, new philosophical system, based on the Bible and God's revelation to man, constructed primarily by Professors Dooyeweerd and

Vollenhoven in the Netherlands, and made it known in North America, and with help from his faithful students, throughout the entire world. The implication of Hart's statement, it seems to me, is that the work Dad did was somehow of a lesser importance than if he had developed some whole new idea system of his own, which, of course, he *didn't* do.

First-rank scholar

But if what my Dad *did* do in his career as a teacher doesn't qualify as scholarship, well, I just don't know. Others *did* consider Dad a scholar. After Dad's death I received a letter from a Christian leader known throughout the world, who wrote, "[H.] Evan Runner was a scholar and teacher of the first-rank." He also wrote, "Introducing me to [Abraham] Kuyper, which has significantly shaped my ministry, was only one of the many things your dad did in my life." And, "I shall always be indebted to him for introducing me to Kuyper."

One of the more prominent students from the last years of Dad's career recently wrote to my sister, "Dr. Runner was a great blessing for many people and for many institutions. He was an enduring model of Christian piety and prophecy. He was a brilliant teacher and scholar. He was a remarkable mentor and counselor. He electrified audiences with his erudition, wit, and charm. He galvanized individuals with his passion, power, and patience. He shaped institutions with his charisma, ken, and contagious enthusiasm. He has left an indelible mark on many bodies of scholarship, and has shaped two generations of students who are now

continuing in his tradition — and struggling to keep up with the high standards that he set." That is the man whom Hart writes made "a self-conscious decision to put scholarship on a back burner."

I suppose questions might be raised asking why I am making an issue of this. It's simple. I believe that the work my Dad did in his lifetime was not only important, but unique. And in addition to that, it was God-glorifying in a way in which little other scholarship has been in the history of the world. I believe in one small way it was a piece of the work of God Himself.

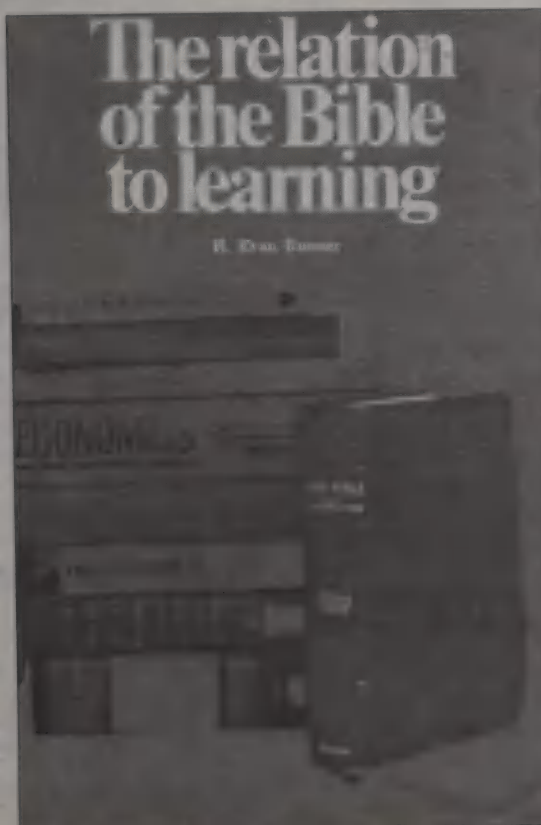
Don't trivialize his work

No, my Dad was not a saint, at least not in the Roman Catholic sense. But to take the work he gave his entire life to, and to twist it, even slightly, as I feel Hart has done here by implication, whether intended or not, is to trivialize not only the man, but his work. I want the world to know my Dad's work in the way he actually did it; the way he intended it to be known. I ask the world to allow Dad's work to be judged on what it really was, rather than on what someone else may try to make it out to be.

I, myself, am not particularly of an academic bent. My area has always been more in technology than in philosophy. Yet I learned the philosophy of my Dad simply by growing up in his household, by osmosis, as it were. Dad would probably say that I know his philosophy pretty well, but at a "pre-scientific" level. So while I may not be able to participate at a very deep level in an academic discussion of these matters, I think I *do* have a pretty good feel for what my Dad stood for, and I have recently been told by an objective and knowledgeable person how well he thinks I seem to understand this.

So that is how I get to this point. I was troubled by what I read (past tense) between the lines of Hart's tribute to my Dad. And having made a promise to myself years ago to not allow, to the best of my ability, my Dad's work to be tarnished, I felt I had to speak up here. I must leave further discussion of this to those more well-versed in academics and the reformational philosophy. I hope that those who are *truly* friendly to my Dad's work will allow their voices to be heard as challenges to it arise from various quarters.

Evan W. Runner lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.



One of Evan Runner's books.

Missions

Abraham Kuyper on the meaning of missions

Translated by Pieter C. Tuit

My message is derived from the word that John spoke in his gospel in chapter 20:21: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

This is the word from Scripture that sanctifies our mission, and it is the law of God for every mission endeavor. We will meditate on it with reverence and deep humility.

"Everyone who knows what he wants and strives for is a missionary — a missionary of Christ or a missionary of Satan."

Every living human being is a missionary. The exception is those who, like vegetables, are indifferent to everything that happens around them, who are always led by others, who never think or act independently and who do not truly live. But those who truly live, who live in a way worth calling life, have something to live for. Everyone who knows what he wants and strives for is a missionary — a missionary of Christ or a missionary of Satan.

Distance between spirits, not places

Generally we think being a missionary demands distance. This is correct if we do not think of distance in terms of space but in terms of distance in a moral and spiritual sense, a distance therefore not between space and space but between spirit and spirit. Everyone who seeks to propagate his spiritual direction, his moral insight is a missionary to those of a different spirit, even when they are near or live in the same house.

It is in this sense that I say mission is universal. No doubt some want to limit missions to the Christian church. But I tell you that the followers of Buddha in India often put our mission endeavors to shame. They have brought their teachings over the great mountains of the Himalayas. And think of the courage and the dedication of the followers of Mohammed. They have not only spread his teaching with the sword, but have also reached into the heart of Asia, into Africa and even into Europe with superior spiritual power.

Think of Indonesia: who are the most dedicated missionaries? Thousands and millions who once were pagans have been converted to Islam.

Every area of life is a mission field worked by people with different worldviews. Think of the



"The church must grow in her womb men who are born for missions and who are put in the cradle for that purpose; men who are good for nothing else."

Jesuits; in spite of their teachings, we must respect their dedication, courage and self-denial.

Missionaries of communism

The same is true of the leaders of the French Revolution. The revolution erupted as a deeply felt spiritual conviction. Although it may not elicit our sympathy, we must admit that these were men who knew what they wanted — men who went out to witness to the world, to conquer it. They also came to the Netherlands. In our time, they continue their mission in the spread of communism. We may curse their efforts, reject their speeches and their influence, but we must respect their spiritual power. They will give their last drop of blood for the cause, to propagate their convictions. The commune is their kingdom.

Closer to home, we see the same in the God-hating world in which we all live. Ask yourself: doesn't this world do missions with a dedication that puts us — the Christian church — to shame? Doesn't it have its day-schools and Sunday schools in all sorts of entertainment industries and places of temptation? And aren't many newspapers daily mission

magazines for what the world stands for? Isn't everyone a missionary — a missionary for Christ or a missionary for Satan?

Where does this impulse come from? Why does every human being have this urge?

Because our God holds within himself an eternal counsel which is nothing other than a great mission program. And we are created in the image of God. After the fall into sin, mankind abandoned God and went in an opposite direction; yet, the impulse, the hunger for spiritual victory remains.

Essence of God's love is to send

For the Father of lights, the essence of his love is to send and to keep sending. His angels are missionaries. This is the literal translation of their name. In his revelatory work, God sent first his patriarchs and prophets, and later his Son. When he ascended into heaven, he sent his Spirit. And after the Spirit has completed his work, God will send his Son once more. The Lord speaks of the prophets: "I have sent to you." Of the angels it is said that they have been sent for the sake of those who will inherit salvation. Nothing is better known than the words on the lips of Jesus "who

was sent by the Father," and who cannot mention the Comforter without adding, "whom I will send."

This is the reason that mankind always sends, even if it is away from God: it originates with God.

No, the church is not more diligent in this respect than the world. God said to mankind, created in his image: "Multiply and fill the earth." Mankind remains faithful to this command. Even though it fell into sin it will fulfill this command, even if it is in an opposite direction. However, in spite of its most intense efforts, the world can no longer fulfil this mandate. It is powerless. It is empty. It is poor. It cannot fill the world with its spirit.

However, the work it cannot do is restored by God's grace.

In the midst of this evil and fallen mankind God has placed, according to his eternal counsel, a church, and to her the word again applies: "Multiply and fill the earth." To her, the apostle Paul says, "Be imitators of God as beloved children." And Jesus says in the words of our text, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." I send you as I have been sent — in suffering, in shame, in contempt, in martyrdom and death.

But my life is in you, and this is your true strength; therefore, your witness will not be fruitless.

The words of Jesus answer three questions:

Who has the right to send?

Who should be sent?

What is the goal that alone lends it glory and strength?

Who has the right to send?

He who sends must have the right and the authority to do so. He must be able to say, "Go!" so that the one who is being sent will go. Furthermore, the messenger, the one who is sent, must have the right to demand a hearing wherever he comes. He is not just a messenger, but an ambassador, like someone sent by a king, through whom the king who sent him, as it were, comes himself and speaks with majesty.

So it is with the Father. He sends his Son. He says to his Son, "Go," and his Son answers, "See, here am I to do your will." And the Son asks that mankind honor God as the Father.

'Whoever receives you, receives me'

The Son is just as sovereign in sending out his apostles. He does not wait until his disciples come to him, but he calls them and sends them out with the words, "Whoever receives you, receives me."

After the apostles have established the church, this royal authority is transferred to the church, and, note, to the church alone. Because "she is a royal priesthood," she is told: "What you will bind on earth will be bound in heaven." She has the right to say: "Go, who receives you, receives me and who receives me receives the Son of God." She has the right to demand obedience from everyone. To her it is said: "All things are yours."

The answer to the question, "Who has the right to send?" is, therefore, the church. And not just the invisible church; because the work of missions has an external side that demands organization. Therefore, the right to send lies with the Christian church as the visible expression of the Church of the Lord.

That this is true has been realized even instinctively. When a missionary has to be ordained, every mission organization calls upon one or more ministers. But this is not completely right. It is the way of Rome, and this order is not right for our church. If a missionary wants to truly establish churches — and not just organizations — they must be erected as part of the historic

Continued on page 14...

Missions

Abraham Kuyper on the meaning of missions

... continued from page 13
Church of Christ.

If we take into account the administration of the sacraments as well as the preaching, then it is clear that no one may do so unless it is in continuity with the order of the church.

The right and also the authority to send lies, therefore, only with the Christian church.

In the work of missions, the believer must also, as the psalmist sings, glorify the Lord in the midst of the "gods." This means it must be done in relation to the ordinances and powers ordained by God, in realizing the royal and priestly majesty that one has in Christ. When the church again takes up the keys of the kingdom, when she again acts according to the Word that "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven," then she will also take up the work of missions.

Then she will claim the world for Christ in royal majesty. Then the holy chain will be restored in her five parts: the world to the church, the church to the Apostles, the Apostles to Christ, the Christ subject to the Father. And along that chain flows the stream of holy and eternal love.

Who must be sent?

Here, also, our text answers: as the Father has sent me, so the Lord sends you, and you must send from your heart.

What did the sending of the Father involve? First he sent his messengers, the patriarchs and the prophets. They were just a shadow of the Son — earthly messengers, accompanied by messengers from heaven, God's angels.

But when the fullness of time had come, he sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. Hereby he accomplished the work of his mission and fulfilled all that was foreshadowed and prophesied. When he left this earth and went to heaven, the Holy Spirit came to complete his work. And after the completion of his task, the Son will return.

So first messengers, then the Son, and finally the Holy Spirit.

How do we measure up?

And how do we measure up? We are sending merely messengers. Without wanting to speak evil of what is done well, in the eyes of the church our missionaries are more like hirelings than sons. She gives them her money, but not her love. They are not her children, the children of her spirit.

Those who labor as apostles



Abraham Kuyper in his study: "The words of Jesus answer three questions: Who has the right to send? Who should be sent? What is the goal that alone lends it glory and strength?"

among the heathen are special. They know they are called and equipped to this mission task and perform wonders in the heathen world. These men are not created by an organization or society. They are born in the bosom of the congregation, the church.

Where did our mission work in the last century come from? From a spirit of general well-being, and what is imperfect in it can be traced back to that origin. We are speaking here of missions in general; there are, of course, positive exceptions. The Reformed Church was asleep: missions did not come from her spirit. No, another spirit had arisen, a sick spirit of brotherhood that preached love for mankind and that wanted to be useful. That spirit infected the part of the church that was still alive, and that spirit, married to the Christian confession, conceived the work of missions.

Along with this tendency towards impersonal spiritual brotherhood, the main need became money. First money, then prayer. That money was used to send out messengers. Money, not the Spirit, provided the impetus. It was a business that compelled men, not a plant that they nurtured. In gifts was her strength.

The church may not remain at this level in sending out her messengers. More needs to be done. Many who support the work of missions are giving a lot, an awful lot. But who of us gives himself, sacrificing all he has? Who gives his Isaac, his son, the only one he loves?

It is to this point that the church

has to come. The church must send her sons. The spirit of mission must envelop her as a church and infiltrate and sanctify her in such a way that she pleads with God to give her children — those exceptional men in whom is found the essence of the spiritual power of the congregation.

Men born for missions

The church must grow in her womb men who are born for missions and who are put in the cradle for that purpose; men who are good for nothing else; men who do not only have the Word of God in their hands but who also have been personally nurtured to be apostolic instruments to a particular people; men who do not have to ask, "Where shall I go?" but who have the conviction in their hearts: "This is where the Lord calls me, for this people I've been born."

Such a mission — such a missionary — grows together with the people where he goes. He does not stay at a distance but enters into their situation, becomes one with them, like Jesus who became man for our salvation.

And if she sends her sons in this manner, the church at the same time sends her spirit. That is, she must include in her congregational life the heathen who have been invited by the word of her sons and who have obeyed. She must pour her spiritual treasure into the churches that have been founded far away, and together with them live the life that is from God and unto God. In this way, comes the communion of the saints. In this way, God's church is built up and

expanded. In this way, God's kingdom comes.

What is missions really all about?

What is the goal that gives missions its nobility and strength? Here, too, our text provides the answer: "As the Father has sent me I am sending you."

To what has the Son been sent? Paul answers this very clearly when he writes in the Epistle to the Philippians: "He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, ... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and [and this is the purpose of it all] every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The Son humbled and emptied himself, took on the form of a servant, and in this way accomplished the work of redemption. Now he is glorified and sits at God's right hand and governs with his Word until one day all will be one in worship, living to the glory of God the Father.

Usually when asked what is the purpose of missions, we answer: the conversion of the heathen, the saving of souls. This is beautiful and good, but this cannot possibly be the final purpose that gives missions its nobility and strength.

Church is a means, not a goal

"What else?" one may ask. The expansion of the church, others will answer. However, the church is a means, not a goal.

No, we must return to him who, also in missions, works out his decree. To him who, also here, says to us: "I do not do this for your sake but for my great name's sake." To the glory of God the Father — this is the final goal of Jesus' coming, the final goal of the church, and therefore also the final goal of missions. When the church forgets this, she moves away from the right foundation. Only when she continually keeps this goal before her eyes, will she — as a means — be serious about the conversion of sinners, the saving of immortal souls and the expansion of the church.

In this way she will come to her full strength. What is the strength of the church? This resides in her "being weak." Because, says the apostle Paul, "When I am weak, then I am strong." It is exactly this sense of weakness, this nothingness and smallness, this sense of complete inability, that leads the Christian church to depend on God. Because of this, she enjoys

God's help through the Spirit who lives in her.

This is why the Christian church can do nothing to her own glory, but sends to the glory of God. Someone who truly loves his Father in heaven, who has said that he will not give his glory to another — how can such a person stand it that, among the heathen, idols get the honor that belongs only to the Father? Who can stand it that he is unknown by thousands and millions and replaced by false gods?

Idol worship hurts God the most

In the Old Testament it is idol worship that most hurts God and is most severely punished. If we are children of this God, redeemed by his Son, we who once also served idols but are now saved through his boundless mercy, according to the counsel of his love, will we not be moved to pity for others?

The church of Jesus Christ may never forget, that she is like a besieged fort surrounded by enemies. She is called to continuous and uninterrupted battle, and in all her striving the goal must be to take away from Satan what belongs to Jesus.

According to God's eternal counsel, there must come before the throne of God not just a great multitude of people, without regard where they are from, but his elect will be a church divided into generations, nations and tongues, and as such she will sing that new song before the throne.

Jesus said to his church, "You shall inherit the earth." Therefore, as lovely and touching as the conversion of a few souls might be, it is not just about the conversion of a few souls, but about the conversion of people as nations.

What is, then, the calling of the church? It is this: First of all to bear spiritual children and then to send them out. If they are present, then sending them out will happen as a matter of course. Then a voice will ask: "Whom shall I send?" And the answer will be, "Send me because from my mother's womb I have been called for this purpose; the fiery coal from the altar has also touched my lips. I shall witness for You."

The above was taken from a speech Kuyper delivered at the 11th anniversary of the Reformed Mission Society at the Scottish Mission Church. It was published from a transcript taken by a reporter and was almost twice as long as the excerpts published here. Pieter Tuit was appointed Professor of Missiology at Calvin Seminary this past summer.

Sports/News

Sponsored to death

Like the good Canadian kid that I am, I grew up breathing hockey. Besides the usual pick-up games of ice hockey and street hockey ("road hockey" to you Easterners), I also inhaled any televised NHL games I could get my eyes on. The players will always live mythologically in my mind: Guy Lafleur, Bobby Hull, Gordie Howe, Harold Sneps (a second-rate Canucks defenseman, but I loved the guy), et al.

The hockey arenas also loomed large. Who can forget the great arenas that dripped with tradition and greatness? Maple Leaf Gardens meant steep railings and that announcer with the nasal voice. The Spectrum in Philadelphia was a rough-looking place in a rough town. Chicago Stadium was a nuthouse. The Forum in Montreal looked like a theatre from the outside and inside housed arguably the greatest hockey house in the world. Fantastic places. Fantastic names.

What do we have now in the NHL? The National Car Rental Centre. General Motors Place. The Staples Centre. Companies have come up with a new marketing strategy. Pay lots of cash to get your name on a building and in return get tons of publicity and name exposure. It's a brilliant idea. And I am so incredibly sick of it.

As if professional sports isn't already one huge commercial, now we get hit in the face with the sales pitch before we even get to the arena:

"Where are you going tonight, Dave?"

"Thought I'd catch a hockey game at the Barq's Caffeine Free Rootbeer Arena."

"Isn't it called the Snuggles Ultra Supreme With Elastic Waistband Centre?"

"No, that was last year. Pampers bought them out and sold the arena name."

Playing the name game

This really bugs me. I think part of it is aesthetic: it just plain sounds stupid to name an arena after a company. I want to watch the Islanders and Devils fight it out at the Meadowlands, not in some impotent teahouse like Continental Airlines Arena. It's the same building with a different name, but they might as well have torn down the Meadowlands.

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



Sponsored by Nobody

The main reason I hate this name game is that it's so manipulative, despite being so blatant. The idea is that we'll be exposed to a product or company without really noticing. Every game needs a venue, so companies figure why not get their name right on the building. Then it doesn't seem like advertising.

It's sort of like what American TV stations do right after the show "Survivor" ends: they allow a company like Pepsi or Kraft to give a five

second blurb that goes something like, "Kraft salutes the Rotu tribe for winning immunity this week." Are we actually supposed to pretend that's not the dumbest, phoniest idiocy we've ever heard? Kraft really cares about who won?

Saturating culture with consumerism

The sin here is not necessarily greed or dishonesty. I think it's the way this kind of advertising further saturates our culture with consumerism. It goes beyond traditional advertising and tries to infect our consciousness even further. More and more things are getting branded or sponsored with corporate symbols. I'm sure the day's not far off when our tap water will be sponsored by Coca-Cola and our toilets will be manufactured so the flush sounds like the Royale Bathroom Tissue jingle.

I want to watch a sport where nothing is sponsored and no one has any agenda except to play the game. It looks like that's become limited to the neighborhood game of street hockey.

Thanks for reading this column. It's been brought to you by a guy who's tired of having things brought to him.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

Lumber company agrees to stop cutting old growth trees

CC Staff

Pressure from universities and other businesses has prompted a U.S. lumber company to stop cutting centuries-old trees in some undisturbed forests on public and private lands. According to the *New York Times*, consumer and environmental groups persuaded several universities and other businesses to stop buying paper products from Boise unless it stopped cutting old growth trees.

"Did these companies influence our decision?" said Mike Moser, a Boise spokesman. "Maybe, but probably not as much as the fact that there's not much old growth available anymore. It's already such a small part of our operations, it just didn't make sense to even deal with it any longer."

Boise limited its policy to trees that are more than 200 years old located in untouched wilderness areas of 5,000 acres or more,

reported the *New York Times*.

While some companies have felt the pressure of environmental groups, others say that a few cancellations will have little effect on the industry. In fact, demand for old trees like redwood has never been higher.

'Roadless rule'

One of Bill Clinton's last acts in office was to sign the so-called "roadless rule," a policy intended to protect more than 58 million acres of the least disturbed wilderness. Environmentalists embraced the roadless rule as a way of protecting ancient trees because the forests are so hard to reach.

However, according to the Forest Service, more trees could be culled from the most remote national forests in the U.S. by 2004 under the policy than were cut in the seven years up to 2000.

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Regina, Sunday, May 5

Sonlight Community Christian Reformed Church
139 Cannon Street, 7:30 pm

Winnipeg, Monday, May 6

Covenant Christian Reformed Church, 653 Knowles Avenue, 7:30 pm

Thunder Bay, Tuesday, May 7

Hope Christian Reformed Church, 1315 Crawford Avenue, 8:00 pm

Brampton, Friday, May 10

Holland Christian Home, 7900 McLaughlin Road, 7:30 pm

Kitchener, Saturday, May 11

The Anglican Church of St. John the Evangelist
23 Water St. North (corner of Duke and Water Streets)
8:00 pm; Admission: \$15 General; \$10 Students/Seniors

Sarnia, Monday, May 13

First Christian Reformed Church, 1105 Exmouth Street, 7:30 pm

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Belgian police deport American Pentecostals

(Compass) — In early February, Belgian police questioned 29 American volunteers working for the Assemblies of God (AOG) in the suburbs of Brussels for possibly violating a work permit law passed by the Belgian government in 1999. Four of the Christians were detained and then deported to the U.S. on Feb. 8 after being

charged as "illegal workers."

For years, American Pentecostals have gone to Belgium as volunteers to take part in various activities of the AOG media department, the Bible correspondence education program or the ministry to universities. They have never had visa problems before.

While the AOG is on the list of

religious movements suspected by the state of being "dangerous sects," it is also a member of the Federal Synod of Protestant and Evangelical Churches in Belgium. The AOG numbers about 5,800 members among 70 congregations in Belgium.

Church Life/Opinion

Warmly welcoming those who visit . . .

... continued from page 10

Although such a course does not ask members of a CRC, or, for that matter, any other Christian church, to do or be anything more than the Bible requires of every Christian, it is difficult if not impossible to follow the instructions given. The course is replete with a cloying clutch of moralisms (refusing to gossip, living a godly life, attending faithfully, developing a servant's heart), all totally void of interpretation or definition.

The Attitude Creed

Based on Philippians 4:4-8, another feature of the course is its "Attitude Creed":

The Attitude Creed

I promise myself...

To so trust Christ that nothing can disturb my peace of mind.

To talk hope, faith and love to every person I meet.

To make all my friends feel there is something worthwhile in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and believe God's promises to come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as I am about my own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater

achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every person I meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of myself that I have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Basically, then, it seems we are to change Paul and Timothy's urgings of Philippians 4 into promises to ourselves, and to be perfect in all things.

Even more troubling is that as a condition for membership it makes no difference whether or not one is, or has been, a member of a CRC. The course is mandatory for any current CRC member who, usually through moving, wishes to transfer membership from one CRC to another.

I know a person who had to take this course. He had been married in the CRC, had six children baptized in it, buried a child out of it, for many years contributed to it freely by playing organ or piano during worship services, had original compositions incorporated in the CRC hymnal, had been an elder in it, and has a spouse who for years was a "Calvinette" counselor. Both he and his wife bit the bullet and took the three-and-a-half-hour course.

Losing out on two

However, in the end they could not see fit to put their collective signatures to the required Membership Covenant. In a congregation where no one gossips, every member leads a godly life, all attend faithfully, and all warmly welcome visitors, they felt that they could not possibly aspire to function at such an elevated level of sanctification. And so on this occasion instead of gaining two members, a CRC congregation lost out on two.

According to the elders' report, one of the main reasons for using the membership covenant is to prevent "church hopping." It would seem wiser to cast a glance inward instead and ask why it is that some members occasionally feel a need to "hop" to another church.

The pastor of the church whose bulletin I quoted informed me that the course and its concomitant covenant is in use by CRCs "from Florida to Alaska." In view of the observations noted above one cannot help but wonder why.

Frank DeVries lives in Nanaimo, B.C.

The truth about widowhood

Anne van Arragon Hutten

Most women will be widowed at some point in their

lives. Given our penchant for marrying older men, and having a longer lifespan as well, the average woman can look forward to years of being alone at the end. When illness sweeps our men away in mid-life, perhaps there will be several decades of widowhood. It's not the first thing young brides think about, but it happens.

We find ourselves alone, prepared or not. Sometimes it feels as though we have become invisible. Even the word "widow" evokes a thought of "old woman without a husband." Friends who are couples drift away.

Pros and cons of being alone

My thoughts on the pros and cons of being alone have been influenced partly by the "friendship group" of which I am a member. Ten or twelve of us gather monthly to enjoy a good meal while enjoying each other's company. It would be trite but true to say we share each other's sorrows. More often we laugh together. It so happens that we're all Dutch, and we often revert to the language of our birth. We share songs we learned as children. We admire each other's house plants, gardens and projects. We share some of the truths we learn about living alone.

Here are a few of those truths:

- * Comfort comes from friends. Often these are other women who face life with courage and grace after losing their husband. I don't recall any of them offering me profound wisdom; they helped just by being there. God uses friends to comfort us.

- * There is life after a spouse's death. In fact, life can be rich and full despite that one big hole. My older friends are not sitting around idly waiting for death; they have hobbies, they visit the sick, they provide moral support to their grown children. Life continues to proffer joy, whether in grandchildren or in the bold flash of an amaryllis.

- * There are advantages to being alone. At our last meeting, someone remarked how nice it is to read for two hours in the middle of the night without being asked to shut off the light. The freedom that comes with being alone is a revelation for many women who have catered to husband and children for so many years. One night when I looked out of the window and saw a glow on the horizon I got dressed and drove 15 miles to watch a store burn down, firemen wielding hoses while the flames flickered across onlookers' faces. It was rather fun.

So much more time

- * You have so much more time! Even for those with outside work, there are long evenings to catch up on scrapbooks, write committee minutes, visit grown children. The Bible, of course, suggests that older widows can be very useful within a congregation because of this freedom. When you're alone you no longer have to worry about getting dinner on by six, or nagging a teenager about homework. It is finally possible to choose your own priorities: the church's outreach committee? more visits to the local nursing home? make a quilt?

(As an aside, women often do much better than men who lose their spouse. I have spoken with several men who have no hobbies or interests apart from work. When they are left alone with long eve-

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



nings to fill, they simply don't know what to do with all that free time. I was much relieved to hear that one friend who lost his wife recently has many hobbies and much community involvement. He will be okay.)

Being alone hurts

- * Being alone hurts. It's not true that all sorrow dissolves instantly if only we trust the Lord. Although we're well aware that God is there for us even in the shadow of death, we still sob into our pillows and ache with loneliness. It is not good that we should be alone, says the Bible, and we feel that very intensely during the first difficult months.

- * There is the sense that you no longer come first with anyone. You feel that you are no longer needed. Your children, much as they care about you, would manage quite nicely without you. You've raised them for independence.

On the other hand, we who are mothers somehow never lose the need to mother. This may be true for all older women, but most have husbands to lavish care on.

- * There is the loss of status; widows simply don't get the same respect that wives get. I have been made even more aware of this since spending time with a man again. There is more respect when I am with a man, especially if he is thought to be successful by worldly standards.

- * There are financial implications to widowhood. Not all men leave life insurance. Farmers and other self-employed men don't always leave much in Canada Pension benefits to their surviving spouses. Some of us have to work hard to survive, or watch expenditures carefully. There's no one else to pay the bills.

- * We alone are responsible. A neighbor whose husband died last year still has difficulty making decisions. He always put gas in the car, mowed the lawn, had the snowblower serviced. He's gone, and now she has to do it all. Taking responsibility for all the practical details is not something women have been encouraged to do.

- * You come home to an empty house. A very old friend of mine routinely has a painful medical procedure done. She comes home to an empty apartment and hurts. It would be nice to get a little hug sometimes, she tells me wistfully. She might have added that widows don't get many hugs, which explains why we do so much of it among ourselves. Our need for human touch does not get buried along with our husband's coffin.

Widowhood is a mixed bag. The key to surviving it lies in actively counting your blessings, and in focusing on the world around you rather than on your own needs. It won't happen overnight, but the time comes when you can once again say, "God is good."

Anne van Arragon Hutten is author of *Uprooted: Dutch Immigrant Children in Canada 1947-1959*, and lives in Kentville, N.S.

Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact Vicky Van Andel via fax at: 1-780-473-0970 or by e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com.

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News Comment

Now for News



Bert Hielema

THE QUESTION OF THIS century is: How best can we shift from a life of depletion and pollution to a culture of permanence and harmony, both for ourselves and for the biosphere that sustains us? That is THE urgent matter in our world where we have driven CO² (Carbon Dioxide) to the highest level ever, have thrown the nitrogen cycle in the atmosphere out of whack and, in general filled the air we breathe with chemical stuff that contributes not only to a global warming — bad news everywhere and for everyone in our world — but also produces respiratory problems and even heart disease. Somehow, quite unnoticed, and, I am sure, unintentionally, we have entered this destructive new phase.

ALMOST THE EXACT opposite happened around the year 1500. Then, too, there wasn't a specific person who suddenly woke up and said: "Hey, we no longer live in the Middle Ages: we have a Renaissance, we have New Life. Look at the good things we are doing." And true, we remember Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Johanne Sebastian. Now, 500 years later, thanks to science, technology, our automobiles, our electric miracles, and our lack of foresight about how this would affect later generations, we have again entered another stage in the history of the human race.

Help me, what is the opposite of Renaissance? What do we call a period in which species are dying off by the thousands, in which we cause the melting of glaciers and Antarctic icefields, in which almost daily we read about more environmental decay? I am at a loss for the right word. Let me call it "Our Challenge." Our challenge is how to get through this perilous period.

Let me, for now, not mention the real question on my mind: can we get through it? Fortunately we have a country that's way ahead of us in a bad way: China. If China can make it in the next decade or two, we can, too. So let's take a trip to the country where 20 per cent of the world's people toil

From 1950-2000, China grew by 700 million to 1.2 billion, in spite of draconian birth control. The greater bulk of this population growth is crammed into the basins of the Yangtze and the Yellow rivers, an area about the size of the Eastern U.S. seaboard or Eastern Canada, from Québec to the Atlantic Ocean. The latter contains less than nine million people. China relies heavily on irrigation, but in the north, where the arable land is, the water table has fallen by 35 meters (125 feet). Of the 617 large cities, 300 already face water shortages. Its capital Beijing, with 20 million people, is now surrounded by desert, and a sandstorm in March reduced visibility to 100 metres and made breathing hazardous.

China is ambitious: it wants to become the Numero Uno industrial country in the world, but it faces a problem, something it shares with us in the West: as industrialization increases and incomes rise, people eat more meat and dairy products, which means more grain consumption and higher water use. And here comes our 21st century dilemma: to grow a ton of wheat, worth a mere \$200 on the world market, takes a thousand tons of fresh water. A thousand tons of fresh water in industrial use yields \$14,000 worth of TVs or toilet paper, or China-made trinkets available in the Dollar Store.

GIVEN THE RELAXING of birth control there, another 300 million will be added by 2030, when China alone can absorb all the grain now exported annually in the world. Already, worldwide grain production is decreasing, because we, too, have problems. So all by its lonely self, China is destined to drive up the price of grain. (My advice: get yourself a plot of land where you can grow your own food.)

China is already short of water. Add to this that in the 50,000 km of major rivers, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, 80 per cent no longer support fish. The Yellow River is dead along much of its course, so fouled

with chromium, cadmium, and other toxins from oil refineries, paper mills, and chemical plants as to be unfit for human consumption and irrigation. Diseases from bacterial and toxic waste pollution are epidemic. Remember that when you buy, say, garlic or any food-stuff, from China.

China is so on the edge of disaster that any irregularity, such as drought, crop disease, or internal political turmoil, can kick the economy into chaos. Its enormous population makes rescue by other countries impossible. If China, so far advanced along the path to which we seem headed, can solve its problems, we can apply the lessons learned, because we, too, are flirting with polluted waters, falling water tables (entire states — Kansas, Arizona, Texas — depend on quickly disappearing aquifers), soil erosion, droughts in the eastern seaboard and the wheatfields in the American and Canadian West. How can we best shift to a more healing phase?

HERE IS ONE WAY TO avert disaster. Roy Romanow is rounding up more healthcare reports. Last week he was in Toronto. I didn't go there. Instead, more impressive, more effective, I will fax a copy of this column. Once words have appeared in print, they seem to carry more authority and give the appearance of Truth. You be the judge.

What then is, in my humble opinion, so important? The meat of my message is that there is a vital link between medicine and spirituality. Sickness and disease will increase in the direct proportion to our abandoning religious devotion. The more we give up on genuine communal worship, avoid reflection and contemplation and, instead, pursue individual materialism, empty entertainment and isolated net surfing, the more we expose ourselves to bodily malfunction and physical ailments. In short, being openly devout is good for ones well-being.

Just as interconnectedness and interdependence is crucial in nature, so it also plays a focal role in medicine. We are, whether we admit it or not, beings with body, spirit and soul, intimately connected to everything around us. Our atoms are constantly being shuffled from the earth and the air through us and back to a tree or another human being or to the earth in a constant dance of sharing. The escalating medical costs and the rise in chronic disease are precisely due to the fact that we have not taken a spiritual or holistic approach to life in general and to medicine in particular. As the

Globe and Mail last week boldly stated in the fattest letters possible: **GOD IS GOOD MEDICINE**, subtitled: "Want to live a longer and healthier life? The answer may be in your place of worship, researchers are finding."

That line is a bit simplistic. Just going to temple, synagogue, church doesn't do the trick. Sorry, sermon and homily presenters, but oral communication is only seven per cent effective, due to information overload. Much more important are the coffee hour, the choir practice, the prayer meetings, the study groups, direct fellowship, in other words, social contacts which build community, of whatever stripe, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian. Also openly pious people tend to be non-smokers, and, if their commitment means anything at all, love for self, for others, for the environment, is translated into more careful living.

Take heart disease: a behavioral medicine specialist, Dr. Mark Goodman, evaluated 41 patients who had angioplasty. He showed that patients with a high potential for hostility tended to block off again; that the chance to survive a first heart attack was not dependent on cholesterol or high blood pressure but on the degree of job dissatisfaction. On the other hand, inner peace heals. Compassion and interconnectedness improve bodily functions.

MEN WHO VOLUNTEER for community organizations were two-and-a-half times less likely to die from all causes of diseases than their non-involved peers. Somehow volunteers get an immediate helper's high, a surge in energy, a feeling of optimism, and an emotion of empowerment. They also report fewer infections, improved eating and sleeping habits,

and even relief of pain. So spiritual medicine — and this is what volunteering also is, as it expresses a love for others — indicates that the heart is more than a mechanical pump, but a particular kind of mind interwoven with the thing we call heart. Proverbs, I believe, says that, "Out of the heart are all issues of life."

LIVING FOR THE SELF alone not only hinders our health but also breaks the connection with the flow of creation. From *ego-centred* beings we have to become *eco-centred*, and fight for pure air, good soil, healthy trees. Sick nature gives sick people.

So, Mr. Romanow, there is more to improving the Health System than mere dollars or more doctors or marvelous diagnostic equipment. Needed is more inner security evident in greater service, of which prayer for others, including sick trees and suffering animals, is the most important. Prayer works. Even the slimmest effect of prayer shows that love, compassion, and intention matter. Prayer breaks through our secularity and is another step away from a pill for this and a pill for that approach, the monetary-mechanical way.

Modern medicine is very much fueled by the money made by drug companies and insurance companies: they like the current system. The lust for money is the root of all evil. In invoking the Spirit, there is no bottom line to consider, because the Top of the Line is beyond price. Such medicine of meaning not only has the potential of healing us but of healing the whole world as well. And it is free!

Bert Hielema enjoyed a long maple syrup season, although the sugar content, due to lack of ground frost, was low in Tweed, Ont.

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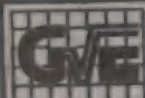


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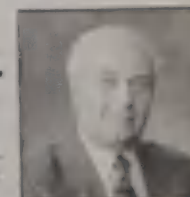
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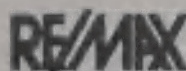
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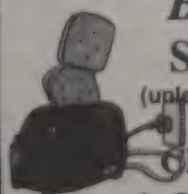
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I will say it again, rejoice!" Philippians 4:4 With great joy and thanksgiving, we are pleased to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of MEILE and ROELIE TAMMINGA (nee Hulsman) Congratulations, with love from your children and grandchildren. There will be an Open House on Saturday, May 11th at Rehoboth Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, 800 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Toronto, from 2 to 4 p.m. Best wishes only. Home address: 10 Snaresbrook Dr., Rexdale, Ont. M9W 2N4</p> <p>1952 April 16 2002 Borculo Edmonton "Great is Thy Faithfulness" With thanks and praise to God we announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandchildren ENGBERT and JOHANNA KOLKMAN (nee Heideman) May God bless you and keep you in His strength and care. 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May the Lord watch over you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26 With love from your family, Fran & Hank Rensink Harry & Milly Roffel Sylvia & Reg Mulder Gary & Brenda Roffel Fred - with the Lord Marg & Harry Bloemendal Liz & Jim Boss Also 23 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Address: Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S. Trinity 516 Brampton, Ont. L6Y 5A7</p> <p>1962 May 11 2002 "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord" Proverbs 18:22 With thankfulness to God, we wish to announce the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our parents & grandparents GORDON and ANNA KRAAYENBRINK (nee Slot) We thank the Lord for His care and provision over the past years and pray for His continued blessings and joy in the future. Much love from us all: Jake & Betty - Moorefield, Ont. Fred & Valerie - Sombra, Ont. Henk & Jennifer - Port Lambton, Ont. Bernard & Karlene - Port Lambton, Ont. Peter & Delicia - Atwood, Ont. and their 24 grandchildren. We invite you to celebrate with us at an Open House on May 11th, D.V., at Wallaceburg C.R.C., (150 Bruinsma Ave.), from 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only please. Home Address: 4412 Hill St., Box 428 Port Lambton, ON N0P 2B0</p>	<div></div> <p>1952 May 9 2002 On May 9, 2002 PETER & ANNA ZWART will remember God's goodness and faithfulness together with their children and grandchildren while celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Dick & Cheryl Peter & Carol Anita & Michael David & Lynn Mark & Dianne 14 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild Open House on Saturday, May 11 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Parkview Meadows, 72 Town Centre Drive, Townsend, Ont. Address: P.O. Box 5207, Townsend, ON N0A 1S0 519-587-3790 E-mail: peters@kwic.com</p>	<p>On Sunday, March 24 2002, JOHN DE JONG was taken home to be with his Lord and Savior. He passed away peacefully while surrounded by family after a brief and courageous battle with cancer. John was in his 75th year and will be sadly missed by his living wife, Jean (nee Guetter) and their seven children: Neil & Kathy De Jong - Burlington Anja & Rich Cameron - Northbrook George & Nancy Hoytema - Surrey, B.C. Ineke & Terry Deonarain - Port Perry Don Hoytema - Clinton Renee & Perry Steinhilber - Surrey, B.C. Gene & Wendy Hoytema - Langley, B.C. Predeceased by a wonderful daughter-in-law, Donna Hoytema (2001), and sister, Nel De Jong (1929). Forever remembered by 11 grandsons and 11 granddaughters, as well as two sisters, Nel and Johann Schipper of Vancouver, B.C. and Ali and Wim Van Ogten of Vianen, Netherlands. We give thanks to our Lord that He answered our prayers. He spared John unnecessary suffering and blessed him with peace. The funeral service was held on March 28, 2002 at the Community Christian Reformed Church in Kitchener, Ontario. Rev. H. Bierman and Rev. B. De Jonge officiated. Interment in Clinton Cemetery at later date. Send correspondence to: Jean DeJong, 41 Catalina Court, Kitchener, ON N2M 5L9</p>
<p>For Rent</p> <p>House to share with Christian young person in St. Catharines. Ideal for students. Spring and summer rate, 250/mo including utilities. On Bus route and close to Mall. For more information, call Anita or Ineke Medcalf at 905-937-3314 or e-mail: imedcalf@sympatico.ca</p> <p>Four bedroom farmhouse in Tara, Ontario. Included is a functional kitchen, T.V., and upstairs bathroom. 20 minute drive to Sauble Beach, Owen Sound, Port Elgin, and Chesley. \$250.00/week. Please call 519-934-3499</p>	<p>Birthday</p> <p>It is with thankfulness that, on May 6, 2002, D.V., we may celebrate the 95th birthday of our Father, Grandfather and Great Grandfather Dirk Van Rooyen God has been faithful through all these years. May God continue to bless you. With love from all of us ... Henk & Connie Van Rooyen - Beamsville, Ont. Dina & Simon Dreise - Chatham, Ont. Marten & Grace Van Rooyen - Forest, Ont. Adrian & Margaret Van Rooyen - London, Ont. Alice & Bert Schreiber - Nepean, Ont. Martha & Albert Luth - Dresden, Ont. (Dick & Elizabeth Van Rooyen - Forest, Ont. William & Margaret Van Rooyen - Ripley, Ont. Bert & Time Van Rooyen - Forest, Ont. Francis & Connie Van Rooyen - Woodstock, Ont. 53 grandchildren and 128 great grandchildren. Home address: 40 Elm St. South Chatham Village, Chatham ON N7M 6A5.</p>	<p>1937 May 7 2002 WEDDING TEXT: "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us!" Psalm 62:8 With praise and thanksgiving to God, we rejoice on the occasion of the 65th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY of our parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents TOM and HENNY ENNEMA (Nee Hartzema) May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you and give you strength in the years to come. Much love and congratulations from: Bill & Corry Veenstra - Brampton John & Marilyn Ennema - Brampton Kees & Shawnee Ennema - Brampton Hank & Mary Ennis - Strathroy 13 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Open House will be held on Saturday, May 4, 2002, D.V., from 2-4 p.m. at Harmony Hall, Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, Ont. Home Address: Apt 304, Hope Tower, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>	<p>Obituary</p> <p>"For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain." Phil 1:21 In His time God called home JOHANNA SANDSTRA beloved wife of Ulbe Sandstra, at the age of 88, on Good Friday, March 29, 2002. Johanna is survived by her children: Gerard de Jong; Dick (Mary) de Jong; Jan (Joan) de Jong; Magda (Jim) Dykstra; Johan (Marian) de Jong; Joanne (Curt) Rozendaal; Tony de Jong; Henry (Linda) de Jong; and step-children: Grace Holtrop; Peter (Margaret) Sandstra; Henry (Nellie) Sandstra; Mike (Wilma) Sandstra; Ann (Ed) Gerlat; Marvin (Wilma) Sandstra; Jenny (Wayne) Wright; Sid (Jeanette) Sandstra; 61 grandchildren, 95 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild. Johanna is also survived by her sister Manna (Alex) Van Aller, sisters-in-law Saar Stoelhorst and Leen de Jong, nieces, nephews, and many friends. Johanna Sandstra was predeceased by her first husband, Arie de Jong in 1963, her son Kees de Jong in 1945, daughter Audrey de Jong in 1979, three grandsons, and one great-granddaughter, and two brothers, Jan Stoelhorst and Hendrik Van Reeden. Johanna Sandstra was born Johanna Stoelhorst on September 23, 1913 in Doetichem, Holland and emigrated to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in early 1951 with her husband and then five children. Four more children were born in Canada. As a widow for several years and while raising a large family she still found time to do volunteer work within her church and the Christian community as well as with the Canadian Cancer Society. Throughout her life she had an outgoing disposition always with a positive outlook on life rooted in her faith in Jesus Christ her Lord. She will be missed greatly by her husband, Ulbe, all her family and many friends. A Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving was held on April 3, 2002 at West End CRC. Home address: #124, 13425-57 St. Edmonton, AL T5A 2G1 Blessed are those who dwell in the Lord.</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p>
<p>For Sale</p> <p>At Little Europe Resort in Bracebridge, Ontario, a remodeled 17 foot trailer with built-on livingroom and bedroom. Four patio doors overlook a large wooden deck. There is a roof over the trailer giving it the appearance of a cottage. \$15,000 or best offer. For more information, please phone 905-791-8455.</p>			<div></div> <p>ROSS & McBRIDE LAW FIRM DAVID A. VAN DER WOERD Commerce Place, 1 King St. West Mail: PO Box 907, Hamilton, ON L8N 3P6 Phone: 905-526-9800 Fax 905-526-0732 Email: dvanderwoerd@rossmcbride.com Direct Dial: 905-572-5803</p>	

Classifieds

Obituaries	Job Opportunities	Teachers	
<p>The strife is over, the battle won, and her victory is in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>JOHANNA H. UFKES (nee) Van Groenenbergh</p> <p>went home to be with her Lord and Savior at the age of 94 on March 29, 2002. Predeceased by her husband Henderikus in 1946 at the age of 40; her son Willem in 1946, aged one year; son Edsko in 1981, aged 47 years; son Peter in 1992, aged 52 years; grandson Richard in 1986, aged 24 years; great-granddaughter Latchia Popoff aged one year; great-grandson Terry Popoff aged eight years.</p> <p>Much loved mother of: Anna & Cor De Groot - Brampton, Ont. Johannes & Anneke Ufkes - Peterborough, Ont. Mary & Tony Koning - Kelowna, B.C. Johanna & Frederik De Pleijt - Georgetown, Ont. Marilyn Ufkes/Gomes (daughter-in-law) - Abbotsford, B.C.</p> <p>Much loved Oma of 19 grandchildren and Great-oma of 46 great-grandchildren. Interment took place at Meadowvale Cemetery on Easter Monday, April 1, 2002 officiated by Rev. J. Kuntz in the presence of her family. A memorial service followed at Holland Christian Homes in Brampton officiated by Rev. John Ufkes, a grandson.</p> <p>In memory, contributions to the CNIB would be greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Correspondence address: Mrs. Anna De Groot, 48 Torrence Woods, Brampton, ON L6Y 2V1</p>	<p>Development Director Position available 2002 - 2003 school year. 1 year 20 % position</p> <p>Jarvis District Christian School is looking for a person with strong Public Relation skills to promote our school to the Christian community. For more information on qualifications, job description, responsibilities and salary, please contact the school at 519-587-4444 or e-mail.</p> <p>Please forward your resume to: Jarvis District Christian School, PO Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0 E-mail at jdcsc@kwic.com</p> <p>SECOND STAFF POSITION</p> <p>Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton, Ontario is seeking a full-time second ordained pastor with an emphasis on youth work or a part-time youth worker, either ordained or non-ordained. This person will work with our senior pastor and various youth ministry volunteers to oversee Immanuel's youth ministry; the full-time ordained position will include preaching and additional responsibilities based on the gifts of the successful applicant. The applicant must be committed to the Reformed faith. A position description for either position is available. Please direct all inquiries, applications or resumes before May 31, 2002 To:</p> <p>Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 61 Mohawk Road West Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 1V9 Telephone: 905-385-0662 Fax: 905-385-5728 E-mail: immcrcnm@direct.com</p>	<p>VERNON, B.C.: Vernon Christian School requires two full-time teachers - Primary and Intermediate levels. Vernon Christian School is a K - 9 parent-operated school, serving a vibrant and diverse Christian community in the sunny Okanagan Valley. Qualified applicants are invited to apply for the above positions for the 2002-2003 school year. We are excited about possibilities for building and program expansion for our school in the fall of 2003. Teachers contemplating a move at that time are encouraged to call the school for more information. Please send resumes to:</p> <p>Mr. Larry Simpson, Principal Vernon Christian School 6890 Pleasant Valley Road Vernon, BC V1B 3R5 Phone: 250-545-7345 Fax: 250-545-0254 E-mail: info@vernonchristianschool.ca</p> <p>WINNIPEG, MANITOBA: Calvin Christian School is seeking applicants for a variety of teaching positions as we experience change and growth: a half-time Kindergarten teacher, a half-time Resource coordinator, permanent and term Grade 4, 5 and 6 teachers, a Grade 7 to 10 French teacher, a Grade 7 - 10 Science/Math teacher, a Grade 7 - 10 ELA and Social Studies teacher. Applicants should be able to certify in the province of Manitoba and able to articulate a personal statement of Christian belief. Please send a resume and cover letter to:</p> <p>D. Taylor, Principal, Calvin Christian School, 245 Sutton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2G 0T1. Fax: 204-339-3280</p> <p>Closing date is April 26, 2002. We appreciate all applications, however, only those short-listed will be contacted.</p>	<div></div> <p>PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL Victoria, B.C. www.pacificchristian.ca</p> <p>Come to the beautiful West Coast and join a dynamic and enthusiastic staff in a thriving, interdenominational Christian school system of nearly 900 students in Pre-school through Grade 12. Qualified applicants are invited to apply for the following positions for the 2002-2003 school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two full-time classroom teachers required at the grade 3 & 4 level One full-time classroom teacher required for grade 6 or 7 One half-time Kindergarten teacher Primary (K-3) Music and French teacher One full-time high school Learning Assistance teacher. <p>Applicants must be committed Christians and certifiable by the BC College of Teachers. Please forward letter of application, resume, Pastor's reference and statement of faith to:</p> <div> <div> <p>Bill Helmus, Elem. Principal Pacific Christian School 671 Agnes Street Victoria, BC, V8Z 2E7 Phone: (250) 479-9365 Fax: (250) 479-3685 E-mail: bhelmus@pacificchristian.ca</p> </div> <div> <p>David O'Dell, Sec. Principal Pacific Christian School 654 Agnes Street, Victoria, BC, V8Z 2E6 Phone: (250) 479-4532 Fax: (250) 479-3511 E-mail: dodell@pacificchristian.ca</p> </div> </div>
<p>March 21, 1915 April 6, 2002 Brock of Lange Dijk, Sarnia, The Neth. Ont.</p> <p>"My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."</p> <p>JOHN DEGROOT</p> <p>God called home to Himself our dear father, husband, Opa, and Great-Opa. He was at peace when he died at 4 a.m. on Saturday, April 6, at the age of 87. We will miss him. He is survived by his wife, Aagje DeGroot-Dekker, who resides at Faith Manor in Brampton, and by ten children.</p> <p>Tena & Len VanRys - London, Ada & Rich VandenBerg - Waterloo Art & Thea DeGroot - Sarnia, Albertena & Michael VanderWeele - Chicago</p> <p>Nelly & Bill VanGeest - Woodbridge Jack & Lydia DeGroot - Sarnia John & Cheryl DeGroot - Sarnia Betty & Tom VanEck - Grand Rapids Marlene & Greg DeGroot-Maggetti - Kitchener</p> <p>Paul & Brenda DeGroot - Millgrove and 31 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Predeceased by son Cor in 1968. Also survived by one brother and two sisters in the Netherlands.</p> <p>A memorial service celebrating his life was held April 9, at First Christian Reformed Church, Sarnia, with Pastor David Weemhof officiating. Contributions will go to the Lambton Christian School Society.</p>	<p>Clarkson Christian Reformed Church, Mississauga, Ontario seeks to fill the position of Music Director/ Worship Coordinator. As a church, we strive for a blended approach in the Reformed tradition of worship.</p> <p>Please contact: Len DeBolster at 905-823-0713 or e-mail@clarksoncncr.on.ca for more information on this position.</p> <p>Youth Director Position: Are you committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Reformed Faith, with a heart for the youth? Can you enhance existing programs? We are looking for a half-time Youth Director. If you feel God is leading you in this direction send your resume or inquiries to:</p> <p>Education Committee Maranatha CRC 2805 Hwy 2 East Bowmanville, ON Canada L1C 3K5 Fax: 905-623-6979 E-mail: maranathacrc@attcanada.net</p> <p>Church Anniversary</p> <p>FORWARD FROM FIFTY Blenheim Christian Reformed Church of Blenheim, Ontario will celebrate their 50th Anniversary, June 22 and 23, 2002. We invite all former pastors, members, and friends to join us for dinner and social evening on Saturday June 22 at 5:00 p.m. and Sunday worship at 10:00 a.m. For more information and dinner reservations (as space is limited), please call: Ann VandenBoogaard at 519-352-1772 or Catherine Verbeek at 519-674-2171 or e-mail: mverbeek@ciaccess.com</p>	<p>VICTORIA, B.C. Lighthouse Christian Academy, a K-12 Christian school with an expected enrolment of some 200 students, located in the Western suburbs of Victoria, invites teachers with a commitment to Christian education who have a BC teaching certificate or qualify for one, to apply to fill the following possible vacancies: secondary information technology (computer education), secondary Bible/Career and Personal Planning, learning assistance, and an opening in the primary grades.</p> <p>Please submit a resume to: Lighthouse Christian Academy 1289 Parkdale Drive, Victoria BC V9B 4G9 E-Mail Info @lighthousechristianacademy.com</p> <p>Church Anniversary</p> <p>Going forward in Faith Mount Hamilton CRC is celebrating their 50th Anniversary as a congregation. All friends and especially former members are invited to join us for an open house at 6:00 p.m. on June 1, 2002 and a special worship service on Sunday June 2 at 9:30 a.m. at 1411 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton Ont. For more information, please call: 905-383-8315 or visit our website at: www.mthamiltoncncr.org</p>	<p>Job Opportunity</p> <p>CALVIN CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF OTTAWA ANNOUNCES A FULL-TIME OPENING FOR PASTOR FOR YOUTH</p> <p>We are seeking someone with a love for the Lord, a desire for continued growth as a disciple of Jesus Christ, a call to minister with youth and young adults, and a love for Christ's Church. The challenge will be to provide leadership in developing and directing youth programming, as well as providing pastoral care and encouragement to youth leaders and those in their care. You will approach this challenge as part of a ministry team, together with the pastor and volunteers in the Youth Ministry division of the congregation.</p> <p>Full job description is available upon request. This position will become available on or around August 1, 2002 depending on availability of the candidate. For a glimpse into the life of Calvin Church, surf to www.calvincrc.ca</p> <p>Applications or inquiries may be directed to:</p> <p>Wilma Runia, Chair of Council, Calvin CRC 7 Gilbey Dr, Ottawa ON Canada K2E 5S4 Ph: 613-225-6468 Fax: 613-225-1132 E-mail: pwrunia@cyberus.ca</p> <div> <p>A special rate is available for first-time subscribers to Christian Courier:</p> <p>\$25 for one year.</p> <p>Friends of CC have made this special offer possible. For more information, call us at: 1-800-969-4838.</p> </div> <div> <p>the Netherlands</p> <p>ALL THE NEWS AND MUCH MORE...</p> <p><i>the Windmill</i></p> <p>Only \$27.50 per year <small>Published twice per month</small></p> <p>Ask for a trial copy.</p> <p>Canada: P.O. Bag 9033, Surrey, BC V3T 4X3 USA: P.O. Box 313, Lynden, WA 98264-0313 Phone: 1-800-881-0705 fax: (604) 532-1734 email: windmill@godutch.com Internet: www.godutch.com <small>* Call for a copy of the Dutch Heritage Pages book catalogue</small></p> </div>
<p>Call Christian Courier today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.</p>			

Classifieds

Teachers	Travel	Miscellaneous
<p>BRESLAU, ONTARIO Woodland Christian High School invites applications from qualified Christian teachers for the 2002 - 2003 school year. Candidates with qualifications in Mathematics, Sciences (Biology), French, English, and the Humanities (Family Studies, Media, Civics, etc.) are especially invited to apply. Some of these positions are regular, full-time positions created by significant growth in our student population. Some are one-year positions to cover for maternity leaves. Since we expect our growth to continue, these positions may also become regular and full-time in the future. Information about Woodland Christian High School is available on our website at: www.woodland.on.ca Please direct applications and inquiries to: Gary VanArragon, Principal Woodland Christian High School 1058 Spitzig Road, R.R. #1, Breslau, Ontario, NOB 1 M0 Phone: 519-648-2114 Fax: 519-648-3402 E-Mail: office@woodland.on.ca</p>	<p>DCA Travel & Cruise E-mail: dcatravi@istar.ca Holiday Packages-Cruises-Flights ON SALE TORONTO 416-224-5211 BRADFORD 905-775-6763 Toll Free 1-800-667-2525 Call today - Free delivery at home</p>	<div> </div> <p>IMAGINE... All the benefits of home and none of the upkeep hassles! MOVE IN THIS OCTOBER</p> <p><i>Welcome to a new lifestyle!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclusively 55 plus • 98 life lease suites • 814 sq. ft. - 1,398 sq. ft. • access to services • 6 Whirlpool appliances • ensuite laundry • solariums • indiv. heating/cooling • easy living design • Christian community • not-for-profit sponsor • premium builder <div> </div> <p>75% sold! Select Suites Available</p> <p>Open House Mondays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Mountainview Church, 290 Main St. E., Grimsby Call 905.309.7888 today for details</p>
<p>TORONTO, ONT.: Timothy Christian School, Rexdale, Ontario has several teaching positions for the 2002-2003 school year. Are you interested in being part of a team of dynamic dedicated teachers supported by a committed Christian community? We are currently looking for teachers in the junior and intermediate divisions. A specialty in Computers, Phys. Ed, Science and Resource would be an asset. Our well established school of 189 students and 14 staff members is situated in the northwest suburb of Toronto. Please send resumes or direct inquiries to: Principal, Timothy Christian School 28 Elmhurst Drive Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5 Phone: 416-741-5770 Fax: 416-741-3359 E-mail: timothychristian@rogers.com</p>	<p>Bed & Breakfast Visiting the Niagara Peninsula? Stay for a night or more at: "Travellers Home Bed & Breakfast" 2666 Eighth Avenue, Vineland, ON L0R 1S0 Call 905-562-5656 for more info. All ensuite rooms. Also motorhome for rent. www.jdnet.nl/travellershome</p>	
<p>TORONTO, ONT.: Toronto District Christian High School invites applications from qualified Christian teachers for a full-time English teacher beginning August 1, 2002. For more information check our website: tdchristian.on.ca Send resumes to: Principal@tdchristian.on.ca or: Ren Siebenga, Toronto DCHS 377 Woodbridge Ave. Woodbridge, ON L4L 2V7</p>	<p>For Sale Boat for Sale - Charger • perfect for waterskiing • Yamaha 115 Horse Power • Ski Pole, Skies • Trailer - shore lander - aluminum rims • 2 covers, 2 prop. Excellent condition If you love waterskiing, you must check it out! Call 905-934-1952</p>	<p>Teaching</p>
<p>WELLANDPORT, ONT.: Wellandport Christian School invites applications from qualified teachers for the following possible openings: • primary division • junior division • intermediate division • special education (50%) Please forward your resume to: Wm. Thies, Principal Wellandport Christian School Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0 Phone: 905-386-6272 Fax: 905-386-7184 E-mail: wcs@law.on.ca</p>	<p>Job Opportunity Smithers CRC Youth Director Do you have a love for youth? Do you believe you've been called to a profession serving young people? Are you passionate for the Lord, teachable, organized? There's a full-time Youth Director Position open in September 2002, in the beautiful northern community of Smithers, BC. If you are interested, send us a letter telling us about yourself. Send it to: Youth Director c/o Glenn Bandstra, Box 566, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0 or e-mail: band@bvl.net Application deadline is April 30, 2002.</p>	<p>TEACH THE CHILDREN WELL Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools Canada's primary producer of Christian school curriculum resources</p> <div> </div> <p>Christian teaching and learning materials developed by Christian school teachers.</p> <p>"... we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord." Ps. 78:4</p> <p>Order Online: www.oacs.org/solutions/main.html Order by Phone: 905-648-2100 Order by Fax: 905-648-2110</p>
	<p>Church Anniversaries 1962 40th ANNIVERSARY 2002 GRACE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH WELLAND, ONTARIO All former pastors, members and friends of the congregation are cordially invited to help us celebrate: on May 11 & 12, 2002. There will be a Potluck Supper on Saturday May 11th at 6:30 p.m. A Sunday Morning Thanksgiving service will be held with participation from former pastors. For more information please call: David Van Lochem at 905-892-9947.</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <div> <p>Consider placing a Personal Ad. \$16.00/column inch per insertion. One time set-up fee is \$35.00 for a box number. GST is extra.</p> </div> <div> <p>The Living Word Sermons for reading services. Contact: CRC R. Vander Ploeg, Sec./Treas. 37 Brick Pond Lane Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1 Phone: (519) 539-2117</p> </div>

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Miscellaneous

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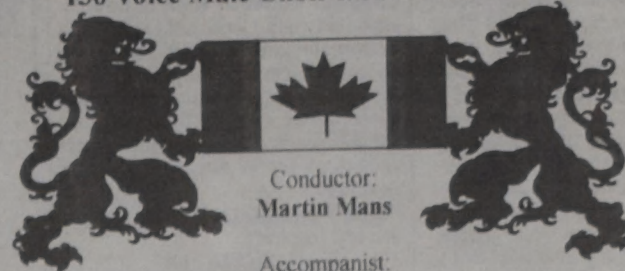
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Events

130 Voice Male Choir from The Netherlands



Conductor:
Martin Mans

Accompanist:
Martin Zonnenberg

Groot Nederlands Mannenkoor

Wednesday, May 8, 2002 - 8:00 p.m.

Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church
2805 Hwy 2 RR #4,

BOWMANVILLE

Thursday, May 9, 2002 - 8:00 p.m.

St. George Anglican Church
99 Woolwich St.

GUELPH

Tuesday, May 14, 2002 - 8:00 p.m.

Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria
67 Church St.,

ST CATHARINES

Admission: Adults \$12.50 Children 12 and under free. Tickets available at the door or in advance by sending a self addressed stamped envelope and a cheque or money order to: The Music Group, 5205 Harvester Rd. #2, Burlington, Ont. L7L 6B5

Groot Nederlands Mannenkoor
&
Liberation Choir

Conductors: Martin Mans & Willem Van Suijdam
Accompanist: Martin Zonnenberg

Dutch Male Choir and Canadian Mixed Choir join in song

Friday, May 10, 2002 - 7:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Congregational Church
450 Park Ave. West

CHATHAM

Saturday, May 11, 2002 - 8:00 p.m.

Redeemer University College
777 Garner Rd. East

ANCASTER

Admission: Adults \$15.00 Children 12 and under free. Tickets available at the door or in advance by sending a self addressed stamped envelope and a cheque or money order to: The Music Group, 5205 Harvester Rd. #2, Burlington, Ont. L7L 6B5
For more info about all concerts, call The Music Group at 905-631-1979 or check our website: www.onsans.ca

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45 Harriet St. Toronto M4L 2G1

Personals

Christian Lady, 51, living in central Ontario interested in meeting Christian gentleman. Reply to:
File # 2732, c/o Christian Courier,
4 - 261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Christian Lady 65+ would like to meet Christian gentleman of similar age. Reply to: File # 2721 c/o Christian Courier, 4 - 261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Hard-working, energetic christian man in mid 20's, who enjoys life, is interested in meeting a sincere, outgoing young lady. Reply to:
File # 2733 c/o Christian Courier,
4 - 261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

55-year-old male would like to meet Christian lady. I am easygoing and down-to-earth. I enjoy the outdoors, camping, country drives, and spending time with family and friends. Reply to:
File #2729 c/o Christian Courier,
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

YOU'RE INVITED TO AN
OPEN HOUSE!

*The Board of the
Canadian Christian Education Foundation
(CCEF)*

*cordially invites you to attend an Open House.
Executive Director, Fred VanderVelde is retiring
and we invite you to join us and celebrate his
27 years of service for the CCEF.*

DATE: Friday, April 26, 2002

TIME: 7:00-9:00 p.m.

PLACE: Calvin Christian Reformed Church,
Fellowship Hall (420 Hwy. 5, Dundas -
5 km West of Clappison Corners)

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- April 27 Redeemer University College Choir in concert at the Wallaceburg CRC 7:30 p.m. Freewill offering.
- May 3-4 Conference on Biblical Evangelism, at Heritage Reformed Congregation, Jordan Station. For information & registration, contact Renee at 905-688-8800, fax 905-688-8808 or e-mail hrconf@hotmail.com
- May 4 Chapel Singers, West Lincoln Hospital Benefit Concert, Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.
- May 4 Cephas CRC, Peterborough, Ont. 50th Anniv. Dinner May 4, Special Services May 5. For information, call: 705-743-5918 E-mail: gjheersink@juno.com
- May 3-13 The King's University College Concert & Chamber Choirs Tour. See ad in this issue for more information on dates and places in your province.
- May 8 Grace CRC, Welland, Ont. 40th Anniversary Supper and Service. See ad this issue.
- May 8-14 Groot Nederlands Mannenkoor & Liberation Choir, Ontario Cities Tour, Bowmanville, May 8, Guelph, May 9, Chatham, May 10, Ancaster, May 11, St. Catharines, May 14. See ad in this issue.
- June 1,2 Williamsburg CRC 50th anniversary, Williamsburg, Ont. See ad in this issue.
- June 1,2 Mount Hamilton CRC, Hamilton, Ont. 50th Anniversary Open house and special worship. See ad this issue.
- June 9 Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont. 40th anniversary service and fellowship at 10 a.m. See ad next issue.
- June 15 Spring of Hope Concert, Wine Tour, Dinner & Concert at Stonechurch Vineyards in Niagara -on-the-Lake and featuring the Ambassador Chr. Male Chorus. Proceeds to Niagara Warehouse of Hope and Chr. Ref. World Mission (water & medical projects in Nigeria) For Reservations & tickets: 905-935-3535
- June 15,16 CRC St. Thomas, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with picnic and service. Info: Jan Vandergeest 519-631-5285 or e-mail: jan@gtn.on.ca
- June 22, 23 Blenheim CRC, Blenheim, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner, social, and worship. See ad.
- July 13,14 Lindsay CRC, Lindsay, Ont. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. For info Ph:705-328-0177. Fax:705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawilms@sympatico.ca

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News

World Vision helps Afghanis on road to recovery

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — As the war slowly dies down in Afghanistan, aid agencies such as World Vision are returning there, to help Afghanis on the road to recovery of their farming and education systems.

World Vision Canada (WVC) is concentrating its efforts on short-term emergency food aid, and longer-term rebuilding of schools. WVC aid worker Philip Maher recently returned from a month-long January visit to Afghanistan, where he saw first-hand the challenges that need to be overcome to help the Afghani people.

"We are working in the northwestern corner, a place called Herat," Maher told *Christian Courier*. That very mountainous region is difficult to travel through, even with chains on tires. "It can take upwards of two to three hours to travel several kilometres. There's snow, a foot and a half of mud.... You're driving up rivers for miles."

Donkey economy

For most people in that region, "it's a donkey economy. You walk or take a donkey," Maher explained. That can cause problems with food distribution to families suffering from drought, which is one of WVC's main programs in Afghanistan. "It's an emergency thing — the reality is, the drought appears to be decreasing," said Maher. Since peace is approaching, "people can go back to planting crops." One advantage which will help Afghani farms get back to normal is that the country already has "a huge irrigation system ... very sophisticated, yet simple," said Maher. The system collects water running off mountainsides.



PHOTOS BY PHILIP MAHER

World Vision food distribution takes place in the Herat, Afghanistan, football stadium. This stadium was used during the Taliban regime to execute political prisoners, or citizens who disobeyed Taliban rules, says WV's Philip Maher.

But at present, "there are clearly food shortages in the northern region," Maher asserted. "I took photos of children needy as any children in Africa." Some were stick-figure "skeletal" children, as are sometimes seen in famine photos from Africa.

In Herat, World Vision was asked by the World Food Program to feed 300,000 people. "We then distributed about 2,800 metric tons of food to about 53,000 families," Maher told ASSIST news recently. "One of the interesting things World Vision has done there, because women have not been allowed to work under Taliban rule in Afghanistan, is to hire 250 women to carry out a food survey. We trained them for a couple of weeks in how to visit homes, fill out the forms — we needed women who were educated, who could write and read in the local language. If the home was found to [have a] food-deficit, they would be issued a food voucher. The next day, the family representative would go to the local stadium where we would exchange that voucher for a bag of wheat, some of which came from the United States, some from Japan and other countries."

WVC also runs healthcare-related programs, "because there are no clinics," Maher told CC.

Rebuilding schools

The agency is also "helping to rebuild schools, in particular, girls' schools," Maher explained. "You walk into the schools, and the windows are gone, and children sit on the floor — very rudimentary conditions."

While the Taliban was in power, "there were secret schools that were running," said Maher. "The informal education was going on in homes." Some children were taught privately by unemployed teachers. Although many girls were deprived of an education, "more than half of boys didn't go [to school] either" under the Taliban, Maher reported. The Taliban focussed on educating people about religion, but spent little money on education at all.

Even before the Taliban banned girls from school, only 10 per cent of Afghan girls, and fewer than a third of the boys, had any formal education, according to a World Vision press release. As a result, many girls have never been inside a classroom.

Now, WVC is rebuilding existing schools in Afghanistan, and has pledged more than \$200,000 to rebuild schools in Herat. Some schools have no heat, their blackboards are the dirty white walls, and many need basic supplies such as desks and books.

WV's plans are to rebuild six schools, while renting temporary facilities for about 3,000 girls until the schools are ready, reports the agency. WV further plans to extend education and school reconstruction programs beyond Herat over the next several years.

Stalled by government

Until recently, WVC was prevented from working in Afghanistan by the Canadian government. The agency has been lobbying the government for permission to work there for the past two years, Maher told CC. When American Christian aid workers were arrested by the Taliban last summer, most non-governmental organizations working in Afghanistan were put on hold by the Canadian government, and Sept. 11 didn't help matters out. But still, WVC was able to make survey trips to Afghanistan to plan for future projects there.

Maher has traveled to WV projects in many countries, but this was his first visit to Afghanistan.



Two young Afghan sisters, Fowzie (left, age nine), and Shokera (age 10), collect wheat for their family. The bag of wheat will supplement their family for about a month.

News Digest

Bald is beautiful

ALDERGROVE, B.C. — Bald is beautiful, according to 26 students, staff and alumni at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy. They all shaved their heads on Feb. 18 to show their support for a beloved teacher, who is going through chemotherapy in her battle with breast cancer.

Denise Graham, 33, teaches English, drama and religious studies at the school, and is now convalescing at home. As a side effect, her hair has fallen out. Her husband, Scott, shaved his own head in support. Scott also works for the school, and his gesture did not go unnoticed.

Students and staff decided to emulate Scott's example. On Feb. 18, 26 students, staff and alumni shaved their heads at a noon-hour 'Shave-athon,' which raised \$5,000 for breast cancer research and support in B.C., according to the *Aldergrove Star*.

North pole going to Russia

OTTAWA (Independent Online) — The magnetic north pole is about to wander out of Canadian territorial waters for the first time in at least 400 years. If it continues on its path it will become part of Russia within 50 years, scientists say.

A study by the Geological Survey of Canada has found that the magnetic north pole has started to move faster than it has done over the past century, says Dr. Larry Newitt, a member of the survey's Ottawa-based team. "It's definitely approaching the territorial boundaries of Canada and I expect it to move into international waters in four or five years' time," Newitt reports. "If it continues in the same direction at the same speed it will hit Russian territory in about 50 years — but it's a big 'if'."

Although the geographic north pole is a fixed point on Earth, its magnetic cousin moves around considerably, essentially because it is subject to the movements of the Earth's molten iron core.

The ride of his life

Winnipeg, Canada (Ananova) — A schoolboy having a driving lesson was taken on a car chase when his ex-cop instructor spotted a criminal.

Jordan Lutz, 15, was being taught by Bernie Friesen a retired Canadian policeman in Winnipeg. They spotted a police car trying to stop a stolen car. The police pulled in front of the car and got out, but two youths got out of the car and ran away. Friesen followed and made a citizen's arrest.

One was caught, but Friesen, 52, decided to swap seats with his pupil and follow the other, reports the *Winnipeg Sun*.

Jordan said: "I was thinking, 'Cool, the cops are arresting somebody.' I didn't know Bernie was going to start helping them. I learned ... what a citizen's arrest is.... Bernie's one of the best teachers I've ever had."

"I don't know what came over me. I thought I was an officer again," Friesen said. He spent 26 years on the force.